

whipping up public support for May statehood could leave him unable to back down even if Israel offered some otherwise acceptable set of terms that slowed down the statehood timetable.

Clinton, Saudi crown prince talk Middle East peace

WASHINGTON (R) — Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Abdullah on Friday offered his "full support" for U.S. efforts to reinvigorate the Middle East peace process as President Bill Clinton prepared to meet Israeli and Palestinian leaders next week.

Clinton and other U.S. officials, seeking Arab support for a peace push in the region, spelled out Washington's hopes for a partial accord during meetings with Prince Abdullah.

"Saudi Arabia expressed its full support for the peace efforts exerted by the United States and Saudi Arabia's willingness to support whatever the Palestinian side agrees to in the service of peace," the two sides said in a joint statement.

The White House announced Thursday that Clinton would meet Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Monday and

Palestinian President Yasser Arafat later next week to try to break an 18-month impasse over a new Israeli troop withdrawal.

Prince Abdullah, the 74-year-old half-brother to King Fahd, began a world tour last week with visits to Britain and France. It is his first major trip to the West since 1987.

The joint statement said Clinton and Prince Abdullah also discussed Iraq, with both sides expressing their concern at the Iraqi government's decision to suspend cooperation with United Nations arms inspectors.

Saudi Arabia, the world's biggest oil producer and an important U.S. ally, played a key role in the coalition that drove invading Iraqi forces out of Kuwait in 1991.

But, like other regional states, it has been reluctant to take an aggressive stand against Iraqi President Saddam

Hussein in recent years.

The prince's visit also coincides with a flare-up of tension between Iran and Afghanistan after the killing by the Afghan Taliban of Iranian diplomats threatened to erupt into conflict.

Clinton and Prince Abdullah called on Iran and Afghanistan to resolve their differences by peaceful means and expressed support for efforts by the U.N. and the Organisation of Islamic Conference to resolve the issue.

The joint statement also covered U.S.-Saudi agreement on international efforts to combat terrorism, condemnation of the situation in Kosovo, and concern over recent nuclear testing in India and Pakistan.

The statement made only passing reference to oil and energy topics. Earlier this week, the White House said U.S. officials would not pressure Prince Abdullah to open

Saudi Arabia's energy sector to more foreign investment.

The joint statement issued after the prince's meeting with Clinton said they had agreed on "the need to continue cooperation to enhance trade and investment between the two countries."

"The two sides stressed the importance of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in the world oil market, and the United States reiterated its recognition of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as a secure and reliable supplier of energy resources, especially to the United States," it said.

Saudi Arabia holds about 262 billion barrels of oil, equal to a quarter of the world's proven crude reserves, and is a key oil supplier to the United States.

On Saturday, U.S. oil company executives will meet with Prince Abdullah and the issue of foreign investment is certain to be raised.



IRANIAN SOLDIERS MARCH IN TEHRAN: Iranian troops armed with AK-47 rifles march during a military parade Saturday in Tehran. Iranian Defence Minister Ali Shamkhani said Iran will begin military manoeuvres with 270,000 soldiers on the Afghan border within the week (Reuters photo)

Taleban claims further gain in central region

ISLAMABAD (AFP) — The Taleban militia Saturday captured another district in Afghanistan's central province of Bamian after facing minimal resistance from opposition troops, the Afghan Islamic Press (AIP) reported.

The district of Panjab was taken as opposition Hezb-e-Wahdat troops in the area surrendered or fled after brief fighting, the private information service quoted Taleban spokesman Wakil Ahmad as saying.

Ahmad said the Islamic militia captured two tanks and a large quantity of arms and ammunition.

Hezb-e-Wahdat represents the minority ethnic Hazara community of Shiite Muslims in Afghanistan.

On Friday, the Taleban militia, composed mainly of ethnic Pashtuns, claimed to have taken the key district of Yawkolang to extend their control in the central region.

The Islamic militia, which has been consolidating its hold in the province since taking the main Bamian city earlier this month, controls nearly 90 percent of Afghanistan.

Last month Taleban forces overran the northern opposition bastion of Mazari-Sharif.

Albright wins pledge of free and fair elections in Algeria

WASHINGTON (AFP) — U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright won assurances Friday from her Algerian counterpart that upcoming presidential elections in the strife-torn north African country will be free and fair, a senior official said.

Foreign Minister Ahmed Attaf "was clear-cut in his commitment in that regard," said the official, who attended the meeting.

It was Albright's first meeting with the Algerian foreign minister, whose visit here came weeks after President Liamine Zeroual announced he was stepping down and called for early presidential elections by February.

During the talks, Albright highlighted the importance

with which the United States views the elections following years of violence pitting Islamic groups and Zeroual's military-backed government.

"They spent some time discussing the need for free and fair presidential elections in Algeria," said the official, who asked not to be named.

"We will be watching that process evolve very carefully," he added.

Attaf also told Albright that the Algerian government was committed to "greater transparency" and that visits by foreign officials to the country would be welcomed, according to the U.S. official.

Albright found this pledge to be a "very positive development," he added.

But in Algerian Amba-

sador to the United States Ramtane Lamamra told AFP that Attaf had stressed that the invitation of international observers for the vote remained to be seen.

Attaf told Albright that "the consultations that President Zeroual will have soon with the political parties will allow for a consensus to be reached on the practical arrangement for free and regular elections, adding that the invitation of foreign observers will then be discussed."

Violence in Algeria has claimed more than 70,000 lives — civilian and military — since 1992, according to estimates by western observers. The official casualty toll in Algeria stands at around 25,000.

'Algerian rebel leader turns himself in'

ALGIERS (AP) — A young leader of a feared Islamic rebel group called "The Phalanx of Death" has turned himself in to police in western Algeria, a newspaper reported Saturday.

Ahmad Khelif, the 17-year-old leader of the "Kaibat Al Mout" group, allied to the Armed Islamic Group, is accused by authorities of carrying out hundreds of massacres of villagers this year in Western Algeria.

The newspaper La Tribune said Khelif turned himself in on Thursday in Mascara, 400 kilometres west of Algiers.

There were no further details, but a government source, who requested anonymity, confirmed the report.

His group is one of five rebel groups waging a battle with army troops in the Saïda mountains, 440 kilometres southwest of the capital.

The fighting has lasted two weeks. There have been no reports of deaths.

An estimated 75,000 people have died in Algeria during a six-year Islamic insurgency sparked by the 1992 annulment of legislative elections in which the now-banned Islamic Salvation Front was heading for victory.

Earlier this week, authorities said 12 people died and 20 were injured in three bombings and clashes between the army and Islamists across the country.

NEWS IN BRIEF

U.N. Afghan envoy to Tehran

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — The U.N. chief's special envoy for Afghanistan will travel to Iran, Pakistan and elsewhere in the region next week in an attempt to ease tensions between Iran and Afghanistan's Taleban militia, a spokesman said Friday. The envoy, Lakhdar Brahimi, leaves Oct. 3 for Tehran, where he is expected to spend several days, spokesman Fred Eckhard said. He is also expected to visit Islamabad, but the rest of his agenda has not been determined. His trip was endorsed Monday by representatives of eight nations who are following the situation in Afghanistan and met at the United Nations on the sidelines of the General Assembly.

'No Afghan nationality for Ben Laden'

ISLAMABAD (R) — Afghanistan's ruling Taleban militia on Saturday denied reports that it had given Saudi terrorist suspect Osama Ben Laden Afghan nationality. "No, this is a lie, we have not given Afghan nationality to Osama Ben Laden," senior Taleban spokesman Wakil Ahmad told the Afghan Islamic Press (AIP) news agency. He was commenting on reports circulating in the Pakistani and Afghan diplomatic community that Bin Laden, who has been given sanctuary by the Taleban, had become an Afghan.

11 die in three days of Algerian violence

ALGIERS (AFP) — Violence claimed the lives of 11 people, including four civilians whose throats were slit and their bodies burned, in a three-day period this week, the daily Le Soir d'Algerie reported Saturday. The four civilian men were in two cars which were stopped at a roadblock thrown up by suspected Islamists at Oued Djer, some 80 kilometres west of Algiers. Three women travelling with them were kidnapped, the evening daily said. Four suspected Islamists were killed in a sweep by security forces Friday in Mouzaia, west of Algiers. Three alleged Islamists were killed by civilian militia earlier in the week at Baraki, on the eastern outskirts of the capital.

Qadhafi criticises NATO threats

CAIRO (AP) — Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi has sent letters to world leaders criticising NATO's threats to use force against Serbia in Kosovo, warning such action could lead to another "world war." Libya's official news agency JANA reported. Qadhafi's letter Thursday followed NATO's warning that it would use force to end Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic's crackdown on ethnic Albanians in the province of Kosovo. The agency said in a report faxed Saturday to the Associated Press in Cairo. "It is a dangerous deterioration... for the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) to intervene in internal troubles of a country that is not a NATO member," Qadhafi said in the letter, which was sent to leaders of China, India, Russia and Brazil.

Sudanese national aided terrorists seeking uranium — U.S.

NEW YORK (AFP) — Federal prosecutors here Friday charged a Sudanese national with being a nuclear weapons procurer and a top official of the terrorist group allegedly controlled by reputed Saudi Islamist Osama Ben Laden.

Mahmoud Salim, 40, arrested in Munich, Germany, last week, was named in a federal complaint unsealed late Friday alleging murder conspiracy

and use of a weapon of mass destruction.

In court papers that amplify details of Ben Laden's Islamist organisation and describe alleged criminal activities dating back to 1992, federal officials said Salim was a financial wizard who helped arrange financial transactions that fuelled Al Qaeda. Ben Laden's international organisation.

Prosecutors charge that Salim was an influential advisor to Ben Laden and sat on an Al Qaeda council called a "Majlis Al Shura," which was authorised to issue death warrants against the United States and its allies.

They say that in the early 1990s, Ben Laden and Al Qaeda leaders talked about attacking U.S. forces in the Horn of Africa, including Somalia, and discussed align-

ing themselves with other Islamist groups against the United States.

According to the complaint, Salim made efforts to develop weapons for Al Qaeda and obtain components of nuclear weapons such as uranium.

Further, prosecutors charge that in the early 1990s, Salim helped arrange for Al Qaeda members to receive explosives training from Iranians in

Tehran as part of a holy war against the United States and its allies.

Herbert Haddad, a spokesman for the office of U.S. Attorney Mary Jo White, whose office is prosecuting the August 7 bombing of the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi, said that the U.S. State Department had begun extradition proceedings to bring Salim from Germany to New York.

Iraq arrests killers of senior Iranian cleric — report

BAGHDAD (AP) — Iraqi authorities have captured the assassins who assassinated a senior Shiite Iranian cleric in southern Iraq in June, a state-owned Baghdad weekly said Saturday.

Al Mustaqbal said Iraq's security

forces apprehended "the perpetrators of the vicious murder of grand Ayatollah Mirza Ali Gharavi" and are investigating the motives behind the killing.

Gharavi, 70, his son-in-law and chauffeur were shot by gunmen as they were driving from the Muslim

Shiite holy city of Karbala to Najaf, 100 kilometres southeast of the capital, Baghdad.

Iraq originally blamed the murder on a "foreign party." In Iran, where the Shiite clergy hold power, officials warned the killing could hurt relations

that were improving slightly in recent months. They demanded that Baghdad investigate the incident.

The magazine gave no further details on the arrests, and there was no immediate comment from Iraqi government officials.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 4773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

15:10 Cartoon — The Pink Panther
15:20 Cartoon — The Pumpkin Patch
15:30 The Adventures of the Black Stallion
16:00 The American Chart Show
17:00N.B.A.
18:00 Drama — Bonne Esperance
19:00Le Journal
19:15 French Programme — Science Magazine (E=M6)
19:30News Headlines
19:35 Life's Most Embarrassing Moments
20:00 Today's Environment — Secrets of Science
20:30 Talk Show — Challenges
21:00Drama — Renegade
22:00News in English
22:30 Mini-series — Frankie House
23:59End of T. X.

PRAYER TIMES

04:05Fajr
05:22(Sunrise) Dhuha
11:27Dhuhr
14:52Asr
17:31Maghreb
18:49Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Sweifeh, Tel. 5920740
Assemblies of God Church Tel. 4632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 4624590
Terra Sancta Church Tel.

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4622366
Anglican Church Tel. 4624853/4634811
St. Afram Syrian Orthodox Church Tel. 4771751
Amman International Church Tel. 5865897
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 5688404
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 5811295
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints Tel. 4654932
St. John the Baptist at De la Salle College Tel. 5661757
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 4637440
Greek Orthodox Church Tel. 4646138
Church of Presentation, Sweifeh Tel. 5920146
The United Catholic Church Tel. 4624757
The English-Language Catholic Parish Tel. 4614190
Evangelical Free Church Tel. 4892679
The Baptist Church Tel. 4628052
The Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 4771331
The Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 4775261

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology
Temperatures are expected to rise

gradually becoming 2-3 degrees centigrade above average, with clouds appearing at low altitudes, and winds northwesterly to northeasterly moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate, and seas calm.
Min./Max. temp.
Amman18/32
Aqaba23/37
Deserts15/33
Jordan Valley22/38
Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 30, Aqaba 34 Humidity readings: Amman 23 per cent, Aqaba 47 per cent.
Following are the highest temperatures expected today in the following areas:
Ajloun25
Jerash32
Um Qays31
Madaba29
Petra31
Dead Sea36

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY
AMMAN:
Dr. Youssef Naser47511404
Dr. Mohammad Saymeh 4396069
Dr. Mohammad Shupir4652693
Dr. Issam Asmar4890504
Firas pharmacy5661912
Al Aserna pharmacy4637055
Nairoukh pharmacy4623672
Al Salan pharmacy4636730
Yacoub pharmacy4644945
Shmeisani pharmacy4637660
Najib pharmacy5347632
IRBID:
Dr. Moammad Al Shar' 7100588
Al Quds pharmacy(—)
ZARQA:
Dr. Nabil Salfarini901322
Khalifeh pharmacy985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre4637111
Civil Defence Department5661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue4630341
Civil Defence Emergency199
Rescue Police 192, 4621111, 4637777
Fire Brigade4617101
Blood Bank4775121
Highway Police5343402
Traffic Police4896390
Public Security Dept.4630321
Hotel Complaints5605800
Price Complaints5661176
Water & Sewage Complaints489467
Amman Municipality Complaints4787111

Repairs4623101
Abdali Tel. Repairs5661101
Jordan Television4773111
Radio Jordan4774111
Water Authority5680100
J. Electricity Authority5815615
Electric Power Co.4636381
RJ Flight Information44-53200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport44-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery 5921199
Husseini Medical Centre Tel. 5868566
Luzmila4630195
Khalidi Maternity4644281/6
Akhleh Maternity4642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity4642362
Malhas, J. Amman,4636140
Palestine, Shmeisani5607071
Shmeisani Hospital5353444
University Hospital5667277
Al-Munshar Hospital5664164
Al-Ahli, Abdali4777101/3
Al-Bashir4775111/26
Army, Marka4891611/15
Royal Alia Hospital5602240/50
Amal Hospital5674155
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital(09)900560
Ibn Sina Hospital(09)986732
Al Hikma Modern Hospital

IRBID:(09)990990
Princess Basma Hospital(02)275555
Greek Catholic Hospital(02)272275
Ibn Al Nafees Hospital(02)247100
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital(03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) Information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (44) 53200-5, where it should always be verified. Information on other flights can be supplied on phone (44) (52700)

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
08:05Larnaca (RJ)
08:30Jeddah (RJ)
09:00Bombay (RJ)
09:05Dhahran, Riyadh (RJ)
09:20Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
16:40 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
17:50London (RJ)
18:10Athens (RJ)
18:10Brussels, Rome (RJ)
18:20Madrid, Geneva (RJ)

05:00Larnaca (RJ)
05:30Aqaba, Paris (RJ)
09:35Frankfurt (RJ)
11:15Rome, Vienna (RJ)
11:15Paris (RJ)
11:30Frankfurt, Berlin (RJ)
12:00Vienna (RJ)
00:50Cairo (RJ)

Other Flights

05:30Tel Aviv (LA)
07:55Dubai (EK)
10:30Sanau, Ta'iz (TY)
10:30Kuwait (KU)
11:30Jeddah (SV)
11:50Moscow (SU)
12:30Abu Dhabi (GF)
14:40Doha (QR)
17:40Beirut (ME)
18:00Paris (AF)
19:00Tel Aviv (LY)
20:00Cairo (MS)
22:20Istanbul (TK)
22:35Larnaca (CY)
00:15Amsterdam, Beirut (KL)
01:25Athens, Beirut (OA)
01:40Belgrade (OK)
02:00Rome (AZ)
03:15London (BA)
Royal Wings (RW)
09:20 Aqaba (arriving at QAIA and proceeding to Marka Airport (RW)
09:35Tel Aviv (QAIA) (RW)
17:00 Aqaba (arriving at Marka Airport)
22:25Aqaba (arriving at Marka Airport) (RW)
DEPARTURES
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
05:00Madrid (RJ)
05:30Aqaba (from QAIA) (RW)
08:30 Aqaba (from Marka Airport) (RW)
20:30Aqaba (from QAIA) (RW)

'Viagra approval awaits health ministry tests'

AMMAN (J.T.) — The government will decide whether to register the male-potency drug Viagra in Jordan based on the results of tests and recommendations by a special technical committee, Health Minister Nael Ajlouni has said.

In a report Saturday in the Arabic daily Al Arab Al Yawm, Ajlouni was quoted as saying that a local agent has submitted a request for permission to import Viagra from the U.S., but the ministry committee has not yet completed its tests.

Ajlouni said the Health Ministry is subjecting Viagra to tests required for the approval of all drugs, and only conclusive results can help the committee take a final decision.

Although Viagra has not been officially approved for sale in the country, the drug has been brought in by private citizens from abroad, especially the U.S., where it is manufactured.

Ajlouni said the ministry must be convinced that Viagra will cause no damage to public health.

"Should we find that the drug might harm public health or leave negative side effects, it would not be registered and would be banned in Jordan," Ajlouni added.

He gave no date for a final decision on the drug. Jordan Pharmacists Association President Abdul Rahim Issa, a committee member, said tests on Viagra have been given priority.

Issa added that Viagra has reportedly helped men suffering from impotence, but the ministry has to determine if it can have side effects on users, especially those with heart conditions.

He added that extra attention in testing is being afforded the drug in light of the 180 deaths worldwide reportedly connected with Viagra use. Issa noted that some committee members believe that Viagra must be marketed in Jordan for two-three months in order to test its effects.

Pharmacists have said that if approved, Viagra is not expected to sell for a different price than in the U.S., where a pill costs around \$10.



PRINCESS SARVATH HOSTS RECEPTION: HRH Princess Sarvath hosts a reception for officials who attended the Jordan National Red Crescent Society's 50th anniversary celebration on Thursday. From left to right: Cornelio Sommaruga, president of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Mohammad Haddid, president of the Jordan Red Crescent Society, Astrid Heiberg, president of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, and George Weber, secretary general of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (Photo by Boghos)

'Oil shale reserves in Jordan estimated at 40 billion tonnes'

AMMAN (Petra) — A seminar on extracting petroleum from oil shale in Jordan opened Saturday at the Natural Resources Authority with the participation of researchers and scientists from the Arab World.

Khaled Shriedeh, assistant secretary general of the Higher Council for Science and Technology, told participants that oil-bearing shale reserves in Jordan are estimated at 40 billion tonnes.

Shriedeh said the council has established a national energy research centre with attention focused on the exploitation of oil shale

reserves. In his remarks at the opening session, Suleiman Abu Aleem, NRA director general, said that although the world now seems to have sufficient reserves of petroleum, there is need to find alternative sources of energy.

Abu Aleem, who attended the conference on behalf of Water and Energy Minister Hani Mulki, said oil shale is found in abundance in Jordan and should be exploited to produce oil. He added that this source of energy is important because oil prospecting has not yet yielded positive results.

Abu Aleem noted that the government has worked with foreign companies through the NRA to prepare feasibility studies on exploiting oil shale reserves.

The seminar will also focus attention on the economic and strategic importance of oil shale, which is found in several Arab countries.

Several working papers are to be reviewed by the participants at the two-day seminar, which was organised by the NRA, the Arab Union of Scientific Research Councils and the HCST.

Nine killed in weekend road accidents

AMMAN (J.T.) — Thirteen people injured in a road accident over the weekend near Ghernata Community College on the Amman-Irbid road received treatment and have been discharged, a source at Princess Basma

Hospital in Irbid said Saturday.

The accident, which involved a collision between a bus and two private cars, also left five people dead, according to the Civil Defence Department.

The persons killed in the accident were students on the way to Irbid to spend leave, according to the department.

Meanwhile, another accident in the Shweier district of Zarqa killed four people. The accident involved two buses.

Tarawneh rules out amendments to Press and Publications Law

By Alia Shukri Hamzeh

AMMAN — The government has no intention of amending the new Press and Publications Law, which went into effect Sept. 1, Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh said Saturday.

"The law is perfectly clear and several of its articles were amended by Parliament, and it went through all the constitutional stages," Tarawneh said. The 1998 law, endorsed by both the Upper and Lower Houses of Parliament last month and made effective by a Royal Decree, has been described by journalists, politicians and human rights activists as highly restrictive.

It includes many vague pro-

hibitions on writing articles that could be seen as harming the stability of the dinar, national unity and religion and public morals.

It also gives courts the right to close down newspapers while they look into lawsuits filed against them by the state for the sake of public interest and national security.

Human rights advocates and journalists have charged that some articles in the law contradict the Constitution and international conventions to which Jordan is a signatory.

The law imposes heavy penalties on violators ranging from JD1,000 to JD20,000.

In his policy statement to Parliament last week, Tarawneh

said his government will implement the law in a "soft" manner while seeking dialogue with the entire press body.

Tarawneh reiterated this intention in his press conference yesterday.

"I and the concerned ministers have been authorised by Parliament and the Royal Decree to enforce the articles of the law. However, if Parliament sees a flaw in the law and wishes to amend it, then it has every right to do so," he added.

According to the Constitution, a group of 10 deputies can table a motion proposing amendments to any law.

In his first press conference after assuming office on Aug. 20, Tarawneh told journalists

that since no problems have so far arisen in connection to the new law, the government sees no need to amend it. But, he said, the government will "not hesitate" to cooperate with Parliament to amend the law if the deputies see fit to do so.

"If we come across any article that is in violation of the people's interests, we will not hesitate to ask the Parliament to amend it," he added.

He also told reporters they can be critical in their coverage of government news, but advised them to stay clear of defamation and slander.

"The law will not be a sword aimed at the necks of people, and we will not be stringent in applying it," he declared.

Higher employment committee to hold first meeting this week

By Ghaliya Alul

AMMAN — A higher committee formed recently to combat unemployment will hold its first meeting this week to address this socio-economic ill, an issue high on the new government's list of priorities, Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh told reporters Saturday.

The decision to form the committee was part of a host of recommendations announced last week by public and private sector participants at a national unemployment conference. The committee is headed by the labour minister and linked to the prime minister.

During his first encounter with the press after winning a vote of confidence on Thursday, Tarawneh said his government plans to take the necessary measures to reorganise the labour market and control foreign labour.

About half of the 300,000 foreign workforce — who mainly hold menial jobs that are usually shunned by Jordanians — are illegally working in the country.

Stressing that a reorganisation of the foreign labour force would avoid friction with the countries of origin of these workers, Tarawneh said the government will start enforcing labour-related regulations in line with agreements Jordan has signed with Arab countries, such as Egypt. These agreements stipulate foreign labourers must obtain work permits before coming to Jordan.

"We will enforce these regulations in a way that will not infringe upon our relations with other countries," the prime minister added.

Tarawneh said that for security reasons, the government plans to take measures to collect information on foreign labourers such as their addresses and the nature of the jobs they hold.

"We do not intend to prevent anybody from working in Jordan... because we are exporters and importers of labour... and all foreign markets are open," Tarawneh said. "But for security reasons, it is important to reorganise the labour market... without

intruding upon peoples' rights and dignities."

He told reporters that no accurate statistics were available

on unemployment in Jordan. Official estimates put the unemployment rate at 15 per cent, while an independent survey said the rate is 27 per cent.

"But there are fewer unemployed Jordanians than foreign workers in the country, which requires the government to identify the size of the problem in order to know how to deal with it," Tarawneh said.

The prime minister pointed to a proposal by 53 deputies during last week's vote of confidence debate to reinstate military conscription. The deputies proposed that conscripts would undergo three months of military training followed by 21 months working in the private sector.

The government will cover half of the expenses paid to the recruits, and the private sector will incur the other half, Tarawneh said.

Such a practice "will provide job opportunities for the unemployed," he added.

Government to consider establishing fund for needy university students

By Fairouz Abu-Ghazaleh

AMMAN — The government Saturday said it will seriously consider demands by 53 deputies to set up special funds to subsidise needy students at Jordan's seven state-run universities as part of efforts to increase enrolment.

During a press conference yesterday, Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh said the government will be responsible for financing the special funds for underprivileged students.

He told journalists the government currently spends JD820 per year for every Jordanian student attending public universities. It is estimated that around 60,000 students attend state-run universities, which face a total debt of JD100 million.

In this regard, the premier mentioned that the government is currently studying a proposal to hike tuition fees at public universities but that such an increase would not affect underprivileged students.

In response to a proposal by 53 deputies to increase university admission quotas, the prime minister said his government will study the suggestion but will have to find ways to financially support such an increase.

"If we can find a way to cover the costs, then we can absorb more students," Tarawneh said.

But he stressed that studying the real market needs of the country and developing vocational training is a must if the country hopes to curb unemployment.

"We have to reconsider the entire educational process and present people with the available alternatives," he said. "Does the country need more people with degrees in history or geography, or will this just postpone the unemployment problem for four years?"

The Kingdom has the highest per capita number of universities in the region.

In the last five years, the number of universities in Jordan jumped to 20, excluding more than 50 community colleges, which have helped absorb the overflow of students seeking higher education.

Analysts say that the high number of universities in Jordan — seven public and 13 private institutions — is chiefly due to the country's position as a regional educational hub and the high percentage of the Kingdom's population who fall in the 18-24 age range, the average age of university students.

Jordanian, Palestinian labour federations to set up joint committee

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordanian and Palestinian labour federations Saturday issued a joint statement at the conclusion of a four-day meeting in Amman providing for the creation of a joint committee to hold annual meetings and follow up on the implementation of bilateral agreements.

The statement reaffirmed the two federations' desire to cooperate in union affairs, expand investments and help open labour markets in the Arab World to allow for the free movement of Arab workers.

Mazen Maaitah, president of the Federation of Jordanian Labour Unions and head of the delegation, and Shaher Sa'ad, secretary general of the Palestinian Labour Federation, stressed the importance of pursuing pan-Arab efforts to achieve a just and durable peace in the Middle East.

The Jordanian side reiterated its support for the Palestinian people's endeavours to establish an independent state on Palestinian soil.

The two sides decided that the bilateral committee

will hold its first meeting in Palestine and agreed to conclude a twinning agreement between the two federations to pave the way for exchanging expertise, holding joint seminars on workers' social security and other relevant issues.

The Palestinian delegation's visit to Jordan came at the invitation of the Jordanian federation.

The Palestinian federation delegation also held meetings with officials at the Labour Ministry and visited a number of factories and businesses.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Regent, Princess Sarvath receive medical delegation

AMMAN (Petra) — Their Royal Highnesses Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, and Princess Sarvath Saturday received a delegation of U.S. surgeons and specialists who are now on a visit to Jordan to conduct reconstructive surgery on Jordanian children in conjunction with the Royal Medical Services. Speaking at the meeting, Prince Hassan and Princess Sarvath expressed appreciation of the U.S. team's humanitarian effort.

The mission to Jordan was organised by an American physician of a Jordanian origin, Eliana Sweiss. Present at the meeting were Major General Yusef Qusous, director of the Royal Medical Services, Adel Haddad, director of the Furoh Rehabilitation Centre, and Emeish Yusef Emeish, the Crown Prince's private physician.

Agreement on aid to refugees

AMMAN (Petra) — The president of the Board of Trustees of the Medical Aid for Palestinians Society, Abdul Majeed Shoman, Saturday signed an agreement with a representative of the French medical society Médecins du Monde, under which Arab Bank will receive a JD544,800 grant from the European Union. The sum will be used to construct a comprehensive health centre to serve 30,000 people in Jerash refugee camp.

House committee meets with FM

AMMAN (Petra) — The Lower House of Parliament's Arab and Foreign Affairs Committee Saturday met with Foreign Minister Abdul Ilah Khateib to discuss Jordan's stand regarding the peace process, pan-Arab relations, and relations with other Arab and foreign countries.

what's going on

FILM

* "Camille Claudel" at the French Cultural Centre on Monday Sept. 28 at 6:30 p.m. and 8:30 p.m.

DARAT AL FUNUN SUMMER '98 FESTIVAL
"Summer '98" cultural activities at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh, to last until Sept. 30, include:

* A study about Libyan author Ibrahim Al Kawny's own experience in writing at 7:00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

* 50 years of graphic art from Lebanon and works by Jordanian artist Sahel Hazi at the Main House.

* Works by Iraqi artist Samer Usama and by Jordanian artist Said Haddadin at the Blue House.

* Installation works by Jordanian artist Samia Zaru at the Byzantine Church.

* Exhibition of photographs "Memory of a Place" by Jordanian artist Hussein Da'eh at the Museum.

LECTURE

* "Early Pre-history in Wadi Faynan" by Dr. Steve Mithen at the Friends of Archaeology Centre on Monday Sept. 28 at 6:00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

* Works by graduates of the Arts Centre (including ceramics, paintings, and sculpture) at the centre, Mahmoud Irtani St. (Tel. 55296191), until Oct. 8.

* "Jordan-Kuwait Industrial Show '98" at the Amman International Auto Exhibit, Airport Road (Tel. 56907531), until Oct. 2.

* Paintings by Mohammad Polise entitled "A Time and Colour" at the City Hall, Ras Al 'Ain (Tel. 4743158), until Sept. 30.

* Display of Bani Hamida and Jordan River Designs products (rugs, cushions, wall-hangings, and quilts) at the Jordan River Designs showroom, until Sept. 30 (Tel. 4613081).

* Photography exhibition entitled "Les Ciel's d'Artistes a Paris" at the premises of the Association of the Jordanian Plastic Artists, Jabal Weibdeh, until Sept. 30.

* Paintings by Rula Shukri at the French Cultural Centre, Jabal Amman, until Sept. 30.

Ministry, conservation society to increase wildlife protection efforts

By Ahmad Khatib

AMMAN — The Ministry of Agriculture and the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature Saturday formed a partnership to implement more conservation policies, including an "urgent" fieldwork mechanism to protect the Kingdom's wildlife.

The ministry's role in the partnership will include providing rangers to help in field programmes, patrols to ensure enforcement of conservation laws, especially in hunting areas, and conducting joint public awareness campaigns.

At a one-day joint workshop entitled "Wildlife: Wealth for All," Minister of Agriculture Mijib Khreisha called for "decisive legal and financial steps to stop the depletion of natural resources in order to protect Jordan from encroaching desertification and degradation of the country's biodiversity."

"I believe that these joint efforts will help ensure the protection and sustainability of our environment and natural resources," Khreisha told the workshop.

The minister stressed that Jordan, which signed the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora in 1979, was committed to the convention and as such had authorised the ministry and the society to take charge of wildlife conservation.

Known as CITES, the convention entered into force in 1973 and now has a membership of 143 countries which act to halt commercial trading in an agreed list of endangered species. These countries also regulate and monitor trade in threatened species.

The convention's aims are major components of Caring for the Earth, a Strategy for Sustainable Living, launched in 1991 by the United Nations Environment Programme, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and the World Wide Fund for Nature.

In 1991, the Kingdom adopted the Middle East's first National Environmental Strategy, which was formulated by the IUCN with the help of more than 180 Jordanian specialists.

"It is now the time to stop chasing and hunting animals. Let them breed and multiply safely," Khreisha said.

The society's role in the partnership will include providing an environmental database and training courses to the ministry and finding a proper mechanism to keep in touch with the government.

Society President Anis Muasher reviewed the society's efforts to protect wildlife, including issuing hunting licences, monitoring hunters and fining violators.

He said the society and the ministry worked together to raise public awareness, especially among students, through conservation clubs and activities and introduce conservation subjects into school curricula.

Two weeks ago, Minister of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment Tawfiq Kreishan, in a statement marking International Ozone Day, urged schools to help the government in its efforts to raise public awareness on protecting the environment.

A U.S. programme, Global Learning and Observing to Benefit the Environment, is being taught at 16 Jordanian schools to help teachers and students cooperate on the need to protect nature.

Muasher said Jordan's nature reserves form an attraction for eco-tourism.

"If we preserve and properly exploit these areas, Jordan will become one of the world's eco-tourism attractions," he said.

Responsible for protecting the Kingdom's natural resources, wildlife and wild areas, the non-governmental society, formed in 1966 and operating under the patronage of His Majesty King Hussein, manages six nature reserves and has plans to set up another seven.

The society is a member of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, the World Wide Fund for Nature and other international environmental bodies. It is also the Middle East representative of BirdLife International.

Meanwhile, according to the society, a group of BirdLife International experts in site-based conservation have plans to hold a three-part workshop on protected areas management. They will "share their experiences in different approaches to site protection and its value in organisational development," said one member.

Germany prepares for cliffhanger vote

BONN (R) — Tense anticipation gripped Germany Saturday as voters prepared for a cliffhanger election that could see Helmut Kohl, the West's longest-serving leader, become the first post-war chancellor to be voted out of office.

Last-minute polls for Sunday's general election showed it was too close to call. Thanks to Germany's complex election laws, the winner could be Kohl, his Social Democrat challenger Gerhard Schröder or Kohl's loyal deputy Wolfgang Schäuble.

The mood in the country was as split as the polls, with many saying it was time for a change after 16 years of Kohl but others doubting a left-leaning coalition of SPD and Greens was the best government to lead Germany into the next century.

The safest bet seemed to be for a grand coalition of Kohl's Christian Democrats (CDU) and the SPD. Even then it was unclear whether Schröder would lead it or the CDU would come out ahead, opening the door to the party's parliamentary leader Schäuble to take over as chancellor.

"Many voters find the alternative quite dismal — they don't want Kohl any more but don't really care for Schröder either," the liberal Munich daily *Sueddeutsche Zeitung* wrote. The two candidates ended their grueling campaigns with large rallies on opposite sides of the country and contrasting messages for the voters.

"We are the future in Germany," Kohl, 68, told supporters in the Rhineland city of Mainz, where he began his career. "I urge you, give us your votes." In Berlin, Schröder told thousands packed into an indoor cycling stadium that Kohl was history.

"Kohl had every chance in the world to solve the country's problems in the last 16 years," he said, pointing to near-record unemployment levels. "But he has failed. With all due respect for his achievements, he deserves to be sent into retirement." The last opinion polls Friday showed Schröder, a slick television performer and at 54 much younger than Kohl, had done what none of the four previous SPD challengers had managed — to hold onto a lead until the eve of an election.

But that lead was now narrower than the polls' margin of error, after standing as high as 12 points above Kohl soon after Schröder, the premier of

Lower Saxony state, was nominated as the SPD's candidate in March. The Emnid polling institute had the SPD at 40 per cent and the CDU at 39 per cent. Two other polls put Schröder up to 4.5 points ahead, but with a fifth of voters undecided.

Germany's complex election procedures only add to the unpredictability of the race because small shifts in local voting patterns can have a decisive influence on the final result in Bonn.

Under this system, no post-war chancellor has been voted out of office. Earlier switches of power came about through shifts in coalitions.

There are 656 seats in parliament, half elected by direct votes for deputies from the 328 constituencies and half picked from party slates in the 16 federal states that voters choose with the second ballot they cast Sunday.

But more seats are added if voters choose more deputies from one party than that group wins from the second ballots, which determine the percentage of seats the party takes in parliament.

In the last election in 1994, the CDU went from a two-seat advantage to a 12-seat majority when it turned out it had won 10 more direct mandates than the second-ballot percentages would have given it. The SPD also won four unexpected seats, bringing the total number of seats in the last legislature to 672.

The minimum number of seats or percentage of votes needed for a majority is also unknown, because it depends on how many parties clear the minimum five per cent hurdle to win seats.

Kohl's current coalition partner, the liberal Free Democrats (FDP), are expected barely to clear the hurdle while the Greens should make it with perhaps a percentage point more to spare.

The ex-Communist Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS) also hopes to return to parliament, even though it polls less than five per cent — a law allowing a party with three directly-elected deputies to take as many seats as its second ballots allow. That amounted to 30 in 1994.

With so many variables, mathematics could determine politics. A grand coalition could emerge if neither the SPD nor the CDU can reach a majority with its smaller partners.



French Prime Minister Lionel Jospin admires a 3,000-year-old bronze wash basin at the Shanghai Museum during a three-day visit to China (Reuters photo)

Jospin says China on road to democracy

HONG KONG (AFP) — French Prime Minister Lionel Jospin arrived in Hong Kong on a lightning visit Saturday after predicting in China that the mainland was headed for democracy after choosing the "path to freedom."

Jospin, who met President Jiang Zemin and Premier Zhu Rongji and sealed deals worth some \$600 million on his three-day China tour, was due to meet Hong Kong Chief Executive Tung Chee-hwa and attend a banquet before returning to France.

The French premier also presided over a forum of local business personalities and discussed economic relations between Asia and Europe.

Before leaving the mainland he said he believed China was making efforts to improve its human rights performance and political freedom.

"I have no doubt that this great country China is on the path to freedom which it has chosen for itself," Jospin said before an audience of Shanghai dignitaries at the city's new Grand Theatre, designed by French architect Jean-Marie Charpentier.

He said he was satisfied with

the results of "constructive dialogue" over the past two years between Paris and Beijing on human rights and on implementing the rule of law in the mainland.

He said talks on developing China's legal system "today represent a substantial chapter in bilateral cooperation."

"China is developing little by little a legal system and judiciary which accords with international norms," Jospin said. He heads home after a brief stopover in Hong Kong later Saturday.

"At the end of the day it's all about putting in harmony the values of our respective civilisations while consolidating universal norms," he added.

Jospin said the visit to China by U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights Mary Robinson "seemed to have opened new channels for dialogue and cooperation" with the international community on human rights.

During earlier talks with President Jiang Zemin the French premier raised the issues of human rights and Tibet and his delegation presented Beijing with a list of nine detained dissidents.

French businesses signed contracts or letters of intent with Chinese firms worth almost \$600 million during the visit.

Anglo-French company GEC-Alsthom signed a letter of intent worth \$211 million to provide equipment for Shanghai's third metro line. Lafarge Consortium bagged a \$150 million deal to produce cement in the southwestern province of Sichuan.

A \$100 million water treatment project in Chengdu in Sichuan was awarded to Vivendi and two projects worth \$55 million for water treatment and incineration in Shanghai were awarded to Suez-Lyonnaise.

Jospin over the past three days has acknowledged China's stated intent to sign the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and said its passage to a market economy would bring greater individual freedoms.

Before his visit, however, authorities detained several leading dissidents. International rights groups had appealed to the French premier to intercede on their behalf.

They pointed to the case of

dissident journalist Gao Yu, who was sentenced to six years in prison for "leaking state secrets" to foreigners. They demanded Gao be released on medical grounds, following the examples of dissidents Wei Jingsheng and Wang Dan who are now in the United States.

Jospin also commented on the growing use of the English language and efforts by France and China to defend their cultures against globalisation.

"We all more or less learn and use English and there's nothing wrong with that," he said at the launch of a French scholarship at a primary school.

"We need one language for universal communication ... and as it will not be Esperanto then without doubt it will be English."

"But, to console ourselves, as the English language will be used by everyone, it will be abused and will lose its original beauty while French and Chinese will retain their purity," he said.

The Chinese language, spoken by more than 1.2 billion people, and French spoken by more than 500 million people in the francophone world, were not in danger, Jospin added.

Chinese police jail dissident for setting up opposition party

BEIJING (AP) — Chinese police plan to keep a democracy campaigner in custody for at least 15 days for trying to set up an opposition political party, a rights group reported Saturday.

Police in eastern Shandong province notified Xie Wanjun's family Thursday that he was being held under a 15-day detention order for passing information on the China Democracy Party, the Information Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Movement said.

The notification was the latest evidence leaders in the ruling Communist Party plan to ban the would-be opposition party outright. Dissidents have tried to register the party since June, hoping to crack a 49-year prohibition against opposition politics.

In the past two weeks, police have detained at least a dozen dissidents often for short periods of time. Most of those taken have connections to the China Democracy Party.

Xie was detained Monday.

Two days later police took away fellow Shandong democracy campaigner Li Lianjun, but his family has yet to receive word on his case, the Hong Kong-based Information Centre said.

Two other dissidents detained Thursday in central Wuhan city have been released, the group said.

China Democracy Party agitator Chen Zhonghe was let go the same day but police did not return 4,000 yuan (\$480) he had collected from other dissi-

dents for victims of summer floods.

Likewise, the Information Centre said police did not return the facsimile machine and 2,000 pages of documents they confiscated from the home of veteran human rights campaigner Qin Yongmin. Qin was released Friday.

The Information Centre also reported that 27 dissidents in eastern Zhejiang have petitioned Chinese President Jiang Zemin to take steps towards political liberalisation.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Austria to deny French troops transit permission

VIENNA (R) — Austria will deny France permission to take troops, tanks and other military equipment across its territory to Slovakia for a planned military exercise in October, the interior ministry said Saturday. Austria's defence and foreign ministries had given the go-ahead for France to be granted the transit permission, but Chancellor Viktor Klima's office blocked the move, which it said would contradict Austria's neutrality. "Each of the ministries has to present its position, according to their different responsibilities," Rudolf Gollis, spokesman for Interior Minister Karl Schögl, told Reuters. "The chancellor's office made a decision on the basis of Austria's neutrality," he said, adding that the interior ministry, which has the final say on such issues, would align itself with the position of Klima's office. France asked Austria for transit permission on Sept. 8. The French embassy in Vienna said it was looking at other options for transporting the troops and equipment to Slovakia. Neutrality was enshrined in the Austrian constitution in 1955 as a condition of the withdrawal of Soviet troops.

Socialist office in Basque region torched

BILBAO, Spain (R) — The Socialist party headquarters in the Basque city of San Sebastian was destroyed Saturday after a group of people wearing masks and hoods set the office on fire, officials said. Basque police said the office in the northern Spanish town was apparently doused with a liquid then set on fire at around 11 a.m. (0900 GMT). One person was slightly injured by the fire and another was hurt in a scuffle that apparently took place before the building was torched, an official in the Basque Interior Ministry said. Socialist officials in Madrid said they could not immediately confirm details of the attack. It was not clear whether the attack was made by Jarrai, a radical youth group linked to the ETA guerrilla group, which has said it does not plan to abide by the unilateral ceasefire the Basque separatists declared more than a week ago. Jarrai has recently waged a "war of the streets" in the Basque country, patterned after the Palestinian intifada. Their vandalism, done by youths in hoods and masks, usually takes place at night. Spanish Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar was in San Sebastian on Saturday for his first visit to the Basque region since ETA announced the ceasefire in its three-decade campaign of violence that has claimed at least 800 lives.

Swedish paper reports failed terrorist plot on U.N.

STOCKHOLM (AFP) — U.S. police are hunting two purported documentary film-makers in connection with a terrorist plot against the United Nations and the Iranian mission in New York. Dagens Nyheter reported Saturday. Carrying Swedish and Canadian passports, the two obtained U.N. accreditation to make a documentary for a Swedish company called Art Vision, based in Malmö, the daily said, adding that no such company existed. The two were in fact members of the anti-Tehran Mujaheddin Khalq, Dagens Nyheter said in a report from New York. Police found floor plans of the U.N. General Assembly and of the Iranian embassy in the men's hotel room. TT news agency quoted a U.N. spokesman as saying, "The men — one of whom was of Iranian origin — had fled. The U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation has questioned two women in connection with the affair, including one who said she worked with a Latin American delegation to the United Nations. The two were in police custody, the report said. A foreign ministry spokesman said he was aware of the affair but declined to comment."

U.S. city rejects NRA gun summit, could lose millions

DENVER, Colorado (AFP) — Denver Mayor Wellington Webb rejected a call from the National Rifle Association (NRA) to bend city rules and let the group display assault weapons at their annual meeting here next year. Webb let stand a Denver city ordinance that forbids the display of assault weapons, at the risk of having the NRA cancel the meeting. The meeting — scheduled for April 29 to May 1 — is expected to bring some 25,000 visitors, and pump an estimated \$22 million into the local economy. Webb had earlier said the NRA might be lifted for the duration of the convention. But Friday he said the NRA must "conform to the laws and ordinances of this city." The NRA, which actively supports several members of Congress, considers that the news media "demonises" the organisation, which brings together numerous hunters and recreational shooters. The organisation, which opposes measures to restrict gun sales, also favours the right of citizens to carry arms freely.

U.K. nanny Woodward starts law degree, paper says

LONDON (R) — Louise Woodward, the British au pair convicted by a U.S. court of killing an eight-month-old baby, is studying for a law degree, the Mirror newspaper reported Saturday. It said Woodward had enrolled for a three-year course at London's South Bank University after working over the summer as an unpaid secretary in Liverpool for the lawyers who helped her during her Boston course case. Woodward, 20, was convicted of second-degree murder in the death of Matthew Eappen, a baby in her care, but a judge later reduced the verdict to manslaughter and sentenced her to the time she had already served in jail — 279 days. The Mirror said Woodward, who returned to Britain in June after Massachusetts's highest court upheld the amended verdict, told fellow students she intended to "try to lead the life of any normal 20-year-old."

Thai scientist discovers new species of shrimp

BANGKOK, Thailand (AP) — A Thai biologist has discovered a new species of freshwater shrimp and named it after the country's most popular princess, Thai newspapers said Saturday. The shrimp, which may have commercial potential, is found in several provinces of north-eastern Thailand where locals have long been eating the small creature. The "Sirindhorn fairy shrimp" is reported as having a red tail and 22 legs, with an average body length of between 1.5 and 1.8 centimetres. La-orn Sanohmuang, the university biologist who identified the shrimp as a new species, said they were usually found in ponds that spring up during the rainy season. It is expected to be spawned and promoted for its commercial potential, she said. The shrimp was named to commemorate the 43rd birthday of Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn, the eldest daughter of King Bhumibol Adulyadej, who is highly regarded for her work on behalf of the country's poor.

Hurricane Georges heads across Gulf of Mexico

MIAMI (R) — Hurricane Georges Saturday was heading across the open waters of the Gulf of Mexico towards its next landfall after battering the Florida Keys with torrential rains, high winds and surging seas.

Communities along the northern Gulf of Mexico coast from Florida's panhandle to Louisiana were on alert for a weekend visit from the deadly storm, which was expected to strengthen and become a major Category Three hurricane capable of significant destruction, before making landfall.

The first voluntary evacuations were put in place in the northern Florida panhandle.

Georges Friday swept across the Keys, the chain of islands off Florida's southern tip, after cutting a five-day swath of destruction across the northern Caribbean.

The hurricane killed at least 288 people during its Caribbean trip, with deaths reported in St. Kitts, Antigua and Barbuda,

Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Cuba and the Bahamas since its rampage began last Sunday.

A hurricane watch, indicating storm conditions could arrive in 36 hours, was in effect from Morgan City, Louisiana, to St. Marks in the Florida panhandle.

The U.S. National Hurricane Centre in Miami said Saturday a tropical storm warning would likely be issued for part of that area later Saturday morning "in expectation of tropical storm force winds on the leading edge of the hurricane reaching the area early Sunday." At 5 a.m. (0900 GMT) Saturday, the centre of Georges was near latitude 25.5 north and longitude 84.5 west, or about 460 736 km southeast of New Orleans.

Georges was moving towards the west-northwest near nine 14.4 km, with that motion expected to continue Saturday.

Maximum sustained winds were near 165 kph, with higher gusts. Some

strengthening was possible during the next 24 hours.

There were no reports of serious injuries or fatalities in Florida. The 3.8 million residents of Miami, Fort Lauderdale and their suburbs breathed a giant sigh of relief that Georges was heading west, away from them.

Georges had threatened to be the first hurricane to hit the area since Hurricane Andrew in 1992. Andrew caused 48 deaths and \$25 billion in losses after striking south of Miami.

In the Keys, Georges' worst was well past by Friday night, but its back end continued to batter the 160-km island chain.

Citing flooding and downed power lines, emergency workers said the Overseas Highway, the only road into the area, would remain closed at least until daylight on Saturday.

The Keys' 80,000 residents had been ordered to evacuate, but authorities estimated that as many as 25 to 50 per cent of them chose to remain.

After Georges swirled in from the Florida Straits right over Key West with 160-kph winds, some said they regretted the decision to stay.

In Key West, residents slog through thigh-high water several blocks north of the monument that normally marks the southernmost piece of land in the continental United States.

Trees and traffic lights were down, power lines dangled, cars were damaged and there was some roof damage to the quaint wooden homes of the city that was once the home of writers Ernest Hemingway and Tennessee Williams.

Early on, the worst damage seemed to have come in the "Houseboat Row" colony, as several houseboats were destroyed.

Emergency workers said it was too early to estimate damage, but they said islands in the southern part of the chain, including Big Pine and Sugarloaf Keys, appeared to have been hit hardest.

"I think that's where we're going to see the real

damage, maybe the lower third of the Keys," National Hurricane Centre director Jerry Jarrell said.

There was flooding up to Key Largo, made famous by the Humphrey Bogart movie of the same name that takes place during a hurricane.

Key West has had past brushes with hurricanes, including a 1919 storm that killed at least 300 people. The Labour Day hurricane of 1935, one of the strongest ever recorded, killed 408 people in the middle and upper Keys. The last hurricane to make a direct hit on the Keys was Hurricane Donna in 1960.

President Bill Clinton declared a state of emergency while Georges was still overhead, authorising federal assistance.

A grim picture emerged of the devastation wrought by Georges as it tore westward across the Caribbean.

The Dominican Republic was devastated. Staff at the Hoy newspaper said it would use a death toll of 180 in Saturday's editions, citing official and unoffi-

cial sources.

The nation of eight million people was virtually without electricity, many towns were isolated by flooding and an estimated 90 per cent of food crops were destroyed. At least 100,000 Dominicans were left homeless.

In Haiti, the death count was at least 87 people, with thousands left homeless. In another blow to the hemisphere's poorest nation, Georges destroyed 80 to 85 per cent of food crops.

Authorities in Haiti said they feared things might become worse, as the Peligre dam on the country's central plateau threatened to burst, endangering 300,000 nearby residents.

Puerto Rico police said the storm killed at least 11 people. Four people were reported dead in tiny St. Kitts in the Leeward Islands, hit Sunday. Two people were killed in the nation of Antigua and, and one in the Bahamas.

In Cuba, the death toll climbed to three, with more than 500,000 people in temporary shelters.



A Malaysian plainclothes policeman arrests a protester in Kuala Lumpur. Police fired tear gas and water cannon in the capital city Saturday to break up the fourth anti-government demonstration in a week (Reuters photo)

Balkan peacekeeping force to be formed

SKOPJE (AFP) — With champagne toasts, four Balkan states put aside a history of rivalry Saturday to agree with NATO partners to form a multinational brigade for international peacekeeping operations.

Signed here against the backdrop of crisis in neighboring Kosovo and the threat of NATO air strikes, the agreement was the fruit of a U.S.-sponsored effort to promote greater security cooperation in a region better known for ethnic strife.

"There are still a number of people in this region who would rather dig fresh graves than bury old hatreds," U.S. Defense Secretary William Cohen told a gathering of defense ministers from southeastern Europe.

"We have the opportunity now to take the road less traveled by and that will make all the difference for security and stability and democracy in this region," he said.

After the signing in a Communist-era conference hall, waiters broke out bottles of champagne so the ministers could toast the initiative.

The Multinational Peace Force Southeastern Europe is to be formed by Romania, Bulgaria, Macedonia and Albania together with Italy, Turkey and Greece under the agreement signed here at a meeting of regional defense ministers.

The United States and Slovenia, though not providing troops for the force, also participated as observers.

Despite the celebratory atmosphere, the defense ministers only signed their names because of a dispute over whether Macedonia should be called the Republic of Macedonia, which Greece opposes, or the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, a U.S. military official said.

U.S. officials said the force would consist of 14 companies — 11 mechanized and three light infantry companies — as well as support elements.

"It conceivably could be available anywhere, and it could be used for a NATO-run operation, it could be for any kind of a multinational operation," a senior U.S. official said.

The brigade is modeled on similar multinational peacekeeping units that have been formed by Central Asian countries, the Baltic states, and central European countries, the official said.

Cohen, who arrived here from a NATO defense ministers' meeting in Portugal, used the occasion to brief his colleagues here on NATO deliberations in preparation for possible air strikes in Kosovo, U.S. officials said.

"A real threat of the use of force will assist in finding a political solution," U.S. Ambassador Christopher Hill, the Skopje-based special envoy for Kosovo, told reporters traveling with Cohen.

Hill was expecting a reply this weekend from Serbian authorities to a U.S. proposal for a three year interim period in which Kosovo would be prepared for self government, officials said.

"I think we are at a phase where there is absolutely no justification from anyone's point of view, including even the Serb's own internal logic, to continue security operations in Kosovo," Hill said.

"To continue those must be seen as a direct effort to attack the civilian population. And it is intolerable. I think they understand that if they continue that there will be a reaction and the reaction could be devastating for Serbia's future," he said.

Concerns about the impact of crisis was evident in comments by ministers here, particularly Macedonia's President Kiro Gligorov who decried the movement of arms and "terrorists" across borders.

"Ethnic intolerance, which has been additionally provoked by the emerging of religious fundamentalism, could incite effects with terrible consequences," he said in an opening speech.

A 750-strong U.N. force in Macedonia is charged with monitoring the Kosovo border, which has remained relatively quiet despite the fighting in the Serbian province.

Cohen was to visit Task Force Able Sentry, the 350-strong U.S. contingent in the U.N. monitoring force, during the day-long visit.

Sunday, the American defense secretary travels to Bosnia for visits with commanders and troops in the NATO-led U.S. Stabilization Force.

'NATO air strike threat will help Kosovo political solution'

SKOPJE (AFP) — A "real threat" of NATO air strikes will help secure a political solution to the Kosovo crisis, U.S. special envoy Christopher Hill said here Saturday as he awaited Serbia's response to a U.S. peace proposal.

Serb authorities said they would respond this week to U.S. proposal setting aside the issue of autonomy for Kosovo for an interim three year period while democratic institutions and self government in the province are developed, officials said.

"A real threat of the use of force will assist in finding a political solution," Hill told reporters traveling with U.S. Defense Secretary William Cohen.

A senior Western diplomat said there was no immediate sign on the ground that Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic was responding positively to NATO's latest threat of air strikes if the bloodshed does not stop.

"I think one has to play this out a few days. The initial reaction may be a certain amount of chest thumping and bravado, but I think one has to play out the scenario a few days," said the diplomat, who spoke on condition he not be identified.

As of Friday, security operations continued north of Pristina although there were unconfirmed reports that the Serbian forces had completed the sweep, the Western diplomat said.

The diplomat, however, insisted that latest phase of the offensive was directed mainly at civilians, as the UCK forces now held no territory and had been virtually defeated.

The Serb strategy appeared to be to empty villages along the road from Pristina to Malisevo, while making it painfully clear to the civilian population that the UCK could not defend them, the diplomat said.

Hill said "we are at a phase where there is absolutely no justification from anyone's point of view, including even the Serb's own internal logic, to continue security operations in Kosovo."

"To continue those must be seen as a direct effort to attack the civilian population and it's intolerable. I think they understand that if they continue that there will be a reaction and the reaction could be devastating for Serbia's future," he said.

'Spanish airliner's captain noted no faults before crash'

RABAT (R) — The captain of a Spanish airliner was in touch with air traffic controllers moments before the plane crashed, killing all 38 people on board, but reported no technical problems, a Moroccan newspaper said Saturday.

"A few minutes before the catastrophe, the captain was in communication with air traffic control in Melilla but did not report any technical problems," the Liberation daily said.

The plane, a Paukair flight from the southern Spanish city of Malaga, slammed into a hillside Friday near the village of Boumahfoud, 30 km from the Moroccan coastal town of Nador, as it was preparing to land at Spain's tiny North African enclave of Melilla.

The Arabic-language newspaper Al Alam said its reporters saw fog covering the mountains near the crash site.

"This might explain why the plane hit a hillside," Al Alam said.

Officials were not immediately available to comment on the reports.

Spanish Civil Guard officials said the plane, a BAe 146-100, disappeared from radar screens just after 9 a.m. (0700 GMT) Friday.

The bodies of the 36 Spaniards and two Moroccans on board were recovered and repatriated to Melilla Friday evening, officials said.

Moroccan officials said Spanish experts had recovered both the flight data recorder and the cockpit voice recorder.

A joint team of investigators from Morocco and Spain would analyse the "black boxes" to determine the cause of the crash, Spanish officials said.

The crash, in which 34 passengers and four crew died, was the worst involving a Spanish passenger flight since 1985, when an Iberia airliner crashed near Bilbao, killing 148 people.

Spanish forensic specialists have identified 13 of the bodies and police said they hoped to identify the rest by the end of the weekend.

Once identified, the bodies will be taken to a makeshift morgue that has been set up in Melilla's Sports Complex, where family members will be allowed to see them.

Tearful family members were brought to Melilla from Malaga and other points in Spain Friday evening. National carrier Iberia offered to take the families to Melilla free of charge.

Spanish company Pan Air Lines Aereas, which rents the planes from British Aerospace then operates them via Paukair, issued a statement saying the BAe 146-100 had passed maintenance tests "satisfactorily" in June.

The statement, published by the Europa Press news agency, said the plane's captain had more than 8,000 flight hours and 18 years of experience.

Paukair, a small local airline, has flown the route between Malaga and Melilla since 1995.

Thousands of Malaysian demonstrators ask for reform

KUALA LUMPUR (AFP) — Several thousand people, including supporters of sacked and detained deputy premier Anwar Ibrahim, gathered Saturday in the heart of the Malaysian capital, which has been placed under tight security.

Key roads leading to the city center have been sealed off as scores of riot police took up positions near the national mosque and the Merdeka Square — scenes of demonstrations led by Anwar last Sunday before his arrest and eventual detention under the Internal Security Act (ISA).

The policemen, armed with tear gas rifles, batons and shields kept the crowd at bay amid shouts of "reformasi" (reform), the rallying cry of Anwar, who is facing sexual misconduct allegations.

Eyewitnesses said police used water cannons to disperse a section of the crowd along the Merdeka Square, a popular tourist spot, while security helicopters circled above.

Anwar's supporters mingled with the crowds, selling books and distributing leaflets about their leader. One book was titled: "Anwar: sex scandal or political conspiracy?"

Police led away several men circulating the leaflets and one Anwar supporter waving a Malaysian flag with the leader's photograph on it.

Several hundred gathered at the national mosque and near-by mosques for prayers, while policemen stood guard outside.

Riot police had stormed the national mosque Friday to break up a pro-Anwar demonstration and had warned of stern action against illegal gatherings.

Anwar was sacked as deputy prime minister and finance minister on Sept. 2 and arrested last Sunday as he led a mounting campaign for reform and for Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammad to stand down.

He is under investigation for sexual misconduct and accused by Mahathir of sodomy. Under the ISA, he can be detained indefinitely without trial.

There were two days of clashes in Kuala Lumpur last Sunday and Monday as riot police cracked down on pro-Anwar demonstrators.

Leaflets distributed at the national mosque Friday called on supporters to join in "peaceful gatherings" Saturday to protest at the detention of Anwar and his associates.

Mahathir said Friday that he would be brought to court to face charges only if his supporters stopped causing disturbances.

"If he will tell his followers not to riot, he will be brought to court for trial," Mahathir told reporters, without saying what charges he would face.

Malaysia meanwhile hit out at foreign criticism of Anwar's detention under the ISA. Foreign Minister Abdullah Badawi said in a statement from New York that Malaysia did not need foreign governments to remind it of the need to protect the rights of its citizens, Bernama news agency reported.

The United States has expressed concern over Anwar's detention under the powerful act.

Abdullah dismissed the U.S. concerns as "unwarranted," saying the act had been invoked only in accordance with its provisions to safeguard national security and public order.

The human rights watchdog Amnesty International called Friday for the "immediate and unconditional release" of Anwar and 14 of his political associates who have been detained, terming them "prisoners of conscience."

It expressed "serious concerns that the detainees are at risk of ill treatment while held in incommunicado detention and unknown location."

A Malaysian opposition leader Saturday urged the attorney-general to stop Mahathir making further allegations of sexual misconduct against Anwar.

Karpal, a prominent lawyer and deputy chairman of the opposition Democratic Action Party, said the premier should let the law take its course "without doing anything which will impinge on the presumption of innocence until proof of guilt on the part of anyone accused of a crime."

Rwandan backing for Congo rebels increasingly open

KIGALI (AFP) — The Rwandan authorities appeared increasingly forthright Saturday in their support for rebels fighting the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) President Laurent Kabila, whom they accuse of genocide.

"The Rwandan government believes that Kabila's regime must now accept the reality of the situation," said Emmanuel Gasana, diplomatic advisor to the Rwandan vice-president and strongman, General Paul Kagame.

"The rebellion is a de facto armed opposition which must be taken into account and with which negotiations must be held for a peaceful settlement," the aide went on.

His comments marked a shift in the extent to which Rwanda has demonstrated its "moral" support of the Tutsi-led rebels who began their uprising in August near the Rwandan border.

"We are already at war against Kabila. We are at war with him politically and diplomatically, because we have nothing to hide," he said.

But Rwandan authorities have consistently rejected Kabila's accusations that they are providing the rebels with military support.

Two of the leaders of the rebellion were seen in the Rwandan capital, Kigali late Friday and were expected to head back to Goma in the eastern DRC later Saturday.

They were Ernest Wamba dia Wamba, leader of the Congolese Rally for Democracy, the rebel forces' political wing, and the movement's "minister for external relations" Bizima Karaha.

Gasana backed the rebels' contention that Kabila's forces have been massacring ethnic Tutsis in several eastern towns such as Goma and Kisangani. Rebels have shown bodies of victims of these alleged massacres to the press.

He attacked the international community for failing to act upon the evidence.

"Do we not all know about the genocide taking place in Kinshasa, Kisangani, Kalem, Goma and Lubumbashi? Have we not all heard about mass graves in the these places?" said Gasana, quoted by the official Radio Rwanda Friday.

"Is it not incomprehensible that the international community remains silent? A clear message and action must be shown now."

"There is now evidence that Kabila's forces are a collection of all the criminal elements in the region," including Hutu Interahamwe militia who fought in Rwanda's genocidal 1994 civil war and Ugandan rebels of the Lord's Resistance Army, he said.

In Geneva, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Friday condemned Kabila's forces for recruiting Rwandan refugees in Congo-Brazzaville.

Several hundreds of these refugees are thought to have left camps in Congo-Brazzaville, said UNHCR spokeswoman Judith Kumin.

Some of them are thought to belong to former Rwandan Armed Forces (FAR) who with Hutu extremists killed more than 500,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus between April and July 1994, said Kumin.

Slovaks wrap up elections that could overturn leadership

BRATISLAVA, Slovakia (AP) — Shunned by Western governments and investors for its heavy-handed practices, Slovakia may be headed for a striking change after two-day national elections end Saturday.

Opposition leaders reiterated their predictions of victory Friday after a strong initial voter turnout in the Central European nation. All 150 seats in Parliament are at stake.

Vladimir Meciar, the authoritarian prime minister whose ruling party topped the last election opinion polls says he will not lead a minority government and has hinted at the possibility of defeat in recent days.

"Meciar has no chance to put together a majority coalition," Grigorij Meseznikov, an analyst at the Institute for Public Affairs, an independent Bratislava think tank, said Friday.

"The opposition parties are certain to win a majority, and it appears they are determined to work together in a new government," Human rights groups and the opposition have warned that the government might meddle with the election in order to stay in power. But two Austrian observers for the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, which has over 200 election monitors present, voiced satisfaction with Friday's voting.

Johannes Vogenhuber told the Austria Press Agency it was "surprisingly well-organised."

Slovak election officials said Saturday the voting was going smoothly with no significant problems nationwide.

From the Danube River in the southwest to the rugged High Tatras Mountains in the east, Slovak voters seem enthusiastic about the vote — the second since the country became independent from the former Czechoslovakia in January 1993.

Pensioners, businessmen and mothers with small children in tow flocked to polling stations in the capital Bratislava, a bustling old industrial city where featureless concrete buildings from Communist times mingle with more graceful architecture from its days in the Austro-Hungarian empire.

Pensioner Ludmila Mariaova, 74, said she voted for Meciar's ruling party because she trusted him. "Nobody else appreciates those of us who have put in four years of hard work," she said outside a Bratislava polling station Friday.

But many younger, more urban Slovaks back the opposition and are fed up with the policies of the ruling party, which they perceive as anti-democratic and benefiting the owners of Slovakia's newly privatised industries.

Six of 17 competing parties are likely to get the required 5 per cent minimum needed to gain seats in Parliament. Only the Slovak National Party, an extreme-rightist group whose billboards proclaim it is "for a Slovakia without parasites" — a slur against minority ethnic Hungarians and Gypsies — says it would ally with Meciar's party.

The other four parties are from the opposition, led by the Slovak Democratic Coalition. Its leader, 43-year-old Mikulas Dzurinda, is the likely opposition choice to become prime minister.

"We will stick together. If there are problems, we are going to stay together, because we will always remember the bad times under Meciar," he said earlier this week.

'Finally, something that works against common cold'

LOS ANGELES (R) — The drug, called AG7088, inactivates the 3C protease enzyme, stopping the spread of the virus. Researchers tested 46 of the more than 100 known HRVs and found the drug effective against them all.

"We tested this compound against 46 different HRV types and we found that every single one of them was inhibited by the compound," Agouron's Dr. Amy Patick said in a telephone interview.

Patick reported her findings at the American Society for Microbiology's Interscience Conference on Antimicrobial Agents and Chemotherapy (ICAAC) in San Diego.

While for most people the common cold is little more than a short-lived nuisance, for some with low immune systems or underlying respiratory problems, contracting a cold can cause serious illness or even death.

Agouron's drug is the latest in a long line of attempts to cure the common cold. One of the problems with finding a cure for the cold is that there are so many HRVs. It is hard to find anything that will vaccinate against them all.

While there are many varieties of HRVs, most have the 3C protease enzyme, which is why Agouron thinks its new drug will help against all colds.

By targeting this enzyme, Agouron is taking a novel approach. Most of the previous failed attempts attacked proteins on the outside of the virus. But 3C protease is on the inside.

"The 3C protease enzyme is a necessity for the virus to replicate and ... the 3C protease enzymes in all HRVs are very much alike," Patick said.

Many potential cures developed over the years failed because they were only effective during a certain part of the virus' spread, while Agouron's approach had the potential to treat a cold at any stage in its development, Patick said.

"We want to be able to use this drug before patients get infected with the virus and we would like to use it after the patients become infected," she said.

Although many drugs in the laboratory have appeared to offer the elusive cure for the common cold only to fail when tested in humans, Patick remains optimistic.

"We have a long way to go," she said. "We have to test in humans and any development pathway can be very complicated, but we're taking the plunge and I'm optimistic."

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Sunday's Economic Pulse

Isolationist economists obsolete

Dr. Fahed Fanek

BELIEVE IT or not, but among Jordanian economists there still are some outmoded economists who live in the past and ignore the real world around them.

Such reactionary economists still think that Jordan made a fatal mistake in opening up its markets. They believe that opening the door for imports is the main reason behind the current economic recession. The cure therefore, in their view, is to restrict imports, either through high levels of customs duties, through a quota system, or by employing the two regimes simultaneously or selectively.

Those economists live outside history. They deal with the problems of a country of their own imagination, which has nothing to do with the real Jordan and its own actual circumstances, level of development and practical relations with the world. They like to see Jordan as a self-sufficient and closed fortress, which can build manufacturing industries as import substitutes in the local market, instead of producing goods and services for large scale export to the vast world markets.

It may be worthwhile for these friends to take note of

the fact that Jordan has already signed a partnership agreement with the European Union, which means, among other things, the creation of a free trade area between Jordan on one hand and 15 industrialised countries on the other, which will develop gradually over the coming 12 years to become a fully-fledged free trade area by the year 2010.

It is equally useful for this outmoded group of economists to understand that Jordan is currently involved in hard negotiations with the World Trade Organisation (WTO) to facilitate early accession to the organisation, which, among other things, entails removal of all custom and non-custom barriers, and the opening up of our market to the international trade in exchange for opening up the international markets for our own exports both of goods and services.

It may be of value for those economists also to take note of the fact that Jordan already signed the agreement for a Pan-Arab free trade area, which means a commitment to reduce customs duty on imports by 10 per cent a year to disappear altogether by the year 2007. As a matter of fact,

Jordan offered willing individual Arab countries to enter into a free trade arrangement with immediate effect and without negative lists of commodities.

In effect, supporters of restrictions on trade want Jordan to withdraw from the European partnership and leave it to other countries of the Mediterranean, such as Israel and Turkey. They want us to shun the WTO which includes around 90 per cent of the world trade, and to join Somalia, Albania, and Namibia who make up the remaining 10 per cent.

The call to close our borders and subsidise weak industries by installing high protection walls, or restricting quantities that can be imported of any commodity is a sort of economic fundamentalism. The closure of borders is no more acceptable even to a great superpower, which can consider the idea of self-sufficiency only to reject it, let alone a small country like Jordan. Building trade walls around Jordan is tantamount to suicide. It is in Jordan's best interest to integrate its economy with the international market and reap all the benefits of huge markets; the growth potential, and increased efficiency of production.

Rehabilitating Iraq

IRAQ'S CALL for normalisation of relations with Kuwait is certainly a step in the right direction. Nine years after the Iraqi invasion and occupation of Kuwait, Baghdad has made several moves to restore normal relations with its neighbouring country including its recognition in 1994 and the acceptance of the U.N. Security Council-imposed borders with it. The one major hurdle that the two countries need to clear is the issue of missing Kuwaitis whom Iraq denies holding and the emirate insists are still in Baghdad's custody. However, although Kuwait should feel more secure now that Iraq relinquished all territorial claims to it and vowed to respect their common international borders, it does not.

The Kuwaitis have been reluctant to reciprocate the Iraqi gestures because they still fear that Iraq harbours aggressive intentions towards its independence and territorial integrity. But after so many years of crippling sanctions and the weakening of Iraq's military and economic might, it is hoped that Iraq is sincere in its declaration that it wants to open a new chapter in its relations with Kuwait and its people. Baghdad could also consolidate its efforts for better relations with Kuwait by signing a non-aggression pact guaranteed by Arab countries as well as by the Security Council. A positive gesture from Kuwait towards Iraq would certainly help to defuse the crisis of confidence between Iraq and the U.N.

After Iraq suspended cooperation with the U.N. Special Commission (UNSCOM) last month, the council responded by adopting yet another resolution calling on Iraq to roll back its decision. Baghdad hinted that the decision to stop cooperation with UNSCOM could be revoked only when the U.N. changes its hostile posture towards it. U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan has called for a fresh reconsideration of the Iraqi file in a bid to gain Iraq's continued cooperation. The five permanent members of the council have since agreed to undertake a comprehensive review of the U.N.'s relations with Iraq provided that Iraq goes back on its decision to halt cooperation with the international organisation.

It seems then that there are enough bases to usher in a new era in international relations with Iraq. The framework for such a new chapter has already been set by the U.N. secretary general, the five permanent members of the council and Iraq. Normalisation of relations between Iraq and the Gulf Cooperation Council countries would certainly lend additional support to the recent efforts to improve relations with Iraq. That is why we wholeheartedly support Iraq's bid to regain its place within both the Arab fold as well as within the international community.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Ra'i's Fahed Fanek said that after the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty, the Kingdom suffered from increased poverty, unemployment and a reduction of economic growth. He added that this was a result of high expectations raised by officials' promises. On the Palestinian track, Fanek said, the situation did not encourage businessmen to invest there. The problem got worse, he said, when the Likud Party came into power. In addition, Israel did not open its market to Jordanian goods, which as a result, did not reach the Palestinian market. At the same time as Jordan lifted the economic ban on Israel, the latter imposed an unofficial one on Jordan, Fanek claimed. Politically speaking, the democratic march has stopped because of the deadlock in the peace process, which in turn resulted in the new Press and Publications Law. Failure in the peace process will negatively affect Jordan's present and future, Fanek said.

Al Dustour's Jihad Momani reviewed the idea of forming a higher council for Jordanian journalism which, he said, will be a result of cooperation between the Ministry of Information and the press. The council will have to find a proper supervision mechanism to control any kind of inappropriate behaviour that might occur in the press, the writer added. Momani said it is obvious that the idea enjoys the blessings of all involved parties. But he warned against hastiness in forming such a body before considering all aspects, and advised that the council's membership should include representatives from all society's sectors. If formed, the suggested council will be the starting point of a unified national forum for press-related issues, Momani stated.

CAN PUBLIC OPINION SAVE CLINTON?

SURE, I KNOW HE'S A SLIPPERY S.O.B. WITH ALL THE DIGNITY OF A DOG ON HEAT, WHO WOULDN'T KNOW THE TRUTH IF IT BIT HIM IN THE OVAL OFFICE, BUT I FEEL KIND OF SORRY FOR HIM...



Statehood and empty gestures

By P.V. Vivekanand

PALESTINIAN LEADER Yasser Arafat takes his case for an independent Palestinian state to the United Nations General Assembly this week against the backdrop of a deadlock in the implementation of the Oslo agreements and Israeli threats to formally annex the West Bank if he declared Palestinian independence in May 1999.

Arafat, obviously seeking to go down in history as the Palestinian leader to declare Palestinian independence from Palestinian soil, is expected to raise his grievances over Israel's refusal to abide by its commitment to the Oslo accord and subsequent agreements, reaffirm his renunciation of armed struggle and appeal for international support for the Palestinian dream of independence.

While the logjam in translating the Oslo accords into realities on the ground is attributed to Israeli-Palestinian differences over the scope of an Israeli military redeployment in the West Bank, the core of the problem remains the unmitigated Israeli pursuit under hard-line Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to pre-empt Palestinian independence and keep the West Bank as Israel's backyard.

To be fair, no one can blame Netanyahu for misleading the Palestinians, the Arab World and the international community at large. He set his agenda during the campaign for 1996 election and won premiership on a clear platform of "peace with security" for the Israeli people and "self-rule but not independence" for the Palestinian people. Regardless of the extent of his success or failure this far, he has been inconsistent in anything but that pledge.

Within the realm of internal Israeli politics, Netanyahu's strategy has worked well so far. But the requirements of peace with the Palestinians dictate otherwise.

At every stage of negotiations with the Palestinians, Netanyahu has been successful in shaping the implementation of the Oslo agreements in his country's favour. He managed to divide Hebron into Jewish and Palestinian sectors, expanded Jewish settlement of the West Bank and Arab East Jerusalem, tightened the Israeli grip on the Holy City and systematically stalled any meaningful discussions on the

thorniest issues of the conflict — the status of Jerusalem, the scope of Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories which would set the outline of a Palestinian entity and the fate of the Palestinian refugees and displaced, scattered in several countries in the region.

Beyond that, Netanyahu, who has retained the old guard Israeli mentality when it comes to the existence of the Jewish state as a lone island despite his Western education and so-called liberalism, could not care less about normalising relations with the Arab World. As such, the Arab freeze in normalisation of relations with Israel is not an issue, as far as his thinking goes.

If anything, he is known to have expressed in private his conviction that Israel could work successfully on setting up relations with any Arab country if it wanted such ties badly enough.

And indeed, like most other Israeli politicians who served as prime minister before him, Netanyahu believes in the might of the Israeli army, coupled with the country's strong "strategic (read military) alliance" with the U.S. as his ace to persuade the Arabs to accept Israeli-dictated solutions for peace in the region. This is firmly entrenched behind his consistent refusal to even entertain the idea of peace with Syria based on a return of the strategic Golan Heights to Damascus.

It is against this arrogance and blatant defiance of international legitimacy that Arafat is hoping to use the U.N. General Assembly to send a passionate appeal to the international community that he had done much more than what was expected of him in line with the Oslo agreements despite Israeli intransigence. He is expected to reassert not only the Palestinians' right to set up an independent state, but also declare that state in May 1999, the hypothetical deadline for the implementation of the Oslo accords, and call for international support for his declaration of independence.

The pattern of world support for the Palestinian approach was set last month when the General Assembly voted to upgrade the status of the Palestine Liberation Organisation with only four dissenting voices — the U.S., two obscure islands in the wilderness, and of course Israel. Indeed, the Palestinians could have done much better with an open "yes" vote from a few of those coun-

tries, mostly European, which opted to abstain, but then their abstention was attributed to political considerations related to the U.S. and Israel rather than opposition to Palestinian aspirations.

Of course, in principle there is nothing that should stop Arafat from declaring Palestinian independence on May 4, 1999, five years to the day the first implementation agreement was signed in Cairo, eight months after the landmark Oslo accord was formalised on the lawns of the White House by Arafat and the then Israeli prime minister, Yitzhak Rabin.

However, Arafat faces several pitfalls. These include another spate of Palestinian militant attacks against Israelis which could tilt world public opinion, albeit indirectly, in favour of Netanyahu's designs, and the possibility of Israel unilaterally "annexing" the West Bank after using military force to retake some or all the West Bank territory now administered by the Palestinian self-rule authority.

Alternatively, Israel could seal off the entire West Bank and lay siege to the territory, making life impossible for the Palestinians until they are ready to sign on the dotted line.

Beyond those military possibilities, Arafat faces a much graver risk. A declaration of independence by the Palestinians will effectively sound the death knell for all negotiations with Israel based on the Oslo accords. This definitely means the end of all hopes for regaining any more of the occupied territories.

In the eventuality that Israel does not opt to invade and retake the Palestinian-controlled territories, the boundaries of the physically isolated chunks of West Bank territory would become the frontiers of the national State of Palestine. And this would effectively kill the Palestinian hopes to have a geographically viable independent Palestinian state.

Indeed, such disintegration of the West Bank was no accident either; it was the predetermined outcome of dividing the territory into "zones" of Palestinian and Israeli control, with the Israeli army remaining in charge of all major highways and access roads connecting one West Bank community to another. Again, it is only a reflection of the inherent weakness of the Palestinian negotiating stand dictated by the balance of power and reality of physical control of territory.

And that is the key to the dilemma.

The Palestinians are left to negotiate on their own but, by definition, their status as the occupied demanding their rights from the occupier has made the negotiations a farce.

Some Arab states did not like the idea of the Palestinians going it alone and signing the Oslo accords while others were happy that the Palestinian problem seemed to be on its way out of their hair. They are not going to re-engage themselves except to issue periodical statements condemning Israel and repeat their call for international sanctions against the Jewish state.

As such, the onus shifts to the international community, which has been most vocal in reiterating support for the Oslo agreements. Indeed, it was the overwhelming welcome that world countries extended to the agreements that encouraged many Palestinians to rally behind the Oslo process, expecting that the world would be willing to exert real pressure on the Jewish state when the time came. Had those expectations materialised, then the Middle East would have been on its way to be a much better place today.

The representatives of those countries who would hear Arafat declare his intentions from the U.N. podium next week, should also be well aware that the Palestinian leader is counting on them to extend effective support for the Palestinian dream of independence by concrete action.

If they really mean the applause they would give to Arafat's emphasis on his commitment to peace with Israel and on the Palestinian pledge not to give up their quest for independence despite all odds, then they could prove it by pulling up the real culprit in the equation — Israel — and ensure that the Jewish state bears the full brunt of international anger until it bows to international legitimacy and respects other's legitimate rights.

But it looks unlikely. In all likelihood, the international voice behind Arafat will be limited to the echoes of the applause that the Palestinian leader will draw in the General Assembly hall, and he will be as lonely as ever as he makes his way out of the hypocritically powerful gathering of the world community.

The writer is a previous editor with the Jordan Times, now working at Gulf Today

The nature of human nature

Editor's note: This is the third and final part of a trilogy on the 'real history of the human race', by Gwynne Dyer

THE DISCOVERIES of the past decade have given us a new view of history, a new insight into pre-history — and maybe even a new understanding of human nature. For a while researchers from many disciplines have been rewriting human history, primatologists have been working on our links with the pre-human past.

A deluge of new research on chimpanzees and other primates has been uncovering the roots of human social, sexual, and even political behaviour in our near primate relatives. Twenty years ago, a book called 'Chimpanzee Politics' would have been ridiculed and dismissed. Now its author, Frans de Waal of the Yerkes Primate Center at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia, is the reigning expert of the new primatology.

Once, primate researchers spent much of their time seeking parallels between human and primate behaviour, but now they are also emphasising the differences between us. They have begun to argue that human beings are less aggressive and more cooperative, less hierarchical and more egalitarian, than our primate relatives. That we are basically (as de Waal's latest book title puts it) 'Good-Natured'. And further, that our cooperative and egalitarian style has clear evolutionary roots and reasons.

So what explains the last 10,000 years of history, a bitter tale of unending violence and exploitation? That is the sort of basic question that is now being tackled. Three or four years ago, for example, I talked my way into a closed multi-disciplinary symposium at Emory, organised by de Waal, on the problem of the 'U-shaped curve'.

The question was: why did we change from the violent, vertical hierarchies of the chimpanzee band to the food-sharing, consensus-based societies of human hunter-gatherers? And why did we then shift from those egalitarian societies to the rigid, vertical hierarchies of mass civilisation, where every society was a tyranny until very recently? Vertical chimpanzees, horizontal hunter-gatherers, vertical civilisations — the U-shaped curve.

There was no definitive answer, of course, but the people who had been invited — anthropologists, archaeologists, evolutionary biologists, primatologists, even social psychologists — talked about how the shift among early humans to pair-bonding (or 'imperfect monogamy', if

you like) broke down the male dominance hierarchies that are typical of our closest primate relatives.

This shift from 'alpha males' lordling it over their harems to a system where couples raised families was driven by the huge demands that human children make on their mothers; human females needed semi-permanent mates to help out. But pair-bonding meant more egalitarian societies where the alpha male had been dethroned, and this kind of society worked a lot better, it turned out, for intelligent, cooperative human groups that could plan ahead.

Then the experts talked about how human beings had to revert to traditional primate dominance hierarchies — pulling a disused old tool out of our evolutionary toolbox, so to speak — to cope with running the huge societies of thousands, then millions of people that were produced by the agricultural revolution. Such societies were just too big to be run by consensus, at least before the availability of mass communications.

They didn't speculate (but I would) about how the drive to democratise mass societies in the past two centuries is an attempt to return to the less hierarchical, more equal social patterns that we lived in until 10,000 years ago, when the groups were small. And nobody was — bold enough to use the discredited word 'progress' — but the new research even offers grounds for resurrecting that heavily loaded term.

The new meta-history is not yet written, but when it is done we may feel a lot better about ourselves than we do now. We will have better answers about race, about the nature of human politics, even about the role of violence in human affairs. Maybe above all about that.

It won't be a very pretty answer. We probably did exterminate our Neanderthal relatives, and in our hunting-and-gathering childhood we were still a very violent lot. The 'Oh, my God, I didn't mean to hit him that hard' variety or in war.

If that's where you're starting from, almost anything can be counted as progress, so we shouldn't get carried away with the notion. But we shouldn't deny change for the better either: to achieve the kind of casualty toll hunter-gatherers lived with, we would need to fight a full-scale nuclear war every 20 years or so.

Correction

In its front page story yesterday, the Jordan Times reported that former Prime Minister Mudar Badran won Parliament's confidence in 1990 by a majority of 64 votes. In fact, Mr. Badran secured 65 votes with nine deputies voting against his government and six abstaining. We regret any inconvenience caused by the error.

The Jordan Times seeks to correct errors as soon as possible. Please quote date and page number. Readers may contact the Jordan Times at the numbers mentioned elsewhere on this page.

September 27, 1998
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Can Russian production seize its chance?

By Marielle Eudes
Agence France Presse

THE CRASH of the rouble has made the price of imported goods soar in recent weeks, creating a golden opportunity for national products to take their place on Russian shelves.

But the question is: Is there actually a Russian product?

Soviet products had lost their competitiveness by the fall of communism in 1991. When the doors to Russian markets were opened to foreign goods, these items were instantly washed away. Since then, however, the industrial infrastructure has not been remodelled and is in a bad way today.

"Investment has been falling for seven years. Production machinery is very run down and there is now less money than ever to relaunch it," an economist said.

Only car-manufacturing appears to be in a strong position, having profited from major foreign investment since a February decree granting privileges to large investors.

Joint projects between Renault and Moskvich, Fiat with GAZ and Ford in the Saint Petersburg area remain high points in Russian manufacturing.

Certain mini-sectors could also take advantage of foreign investors pulling out of the country. Chocolate, biscuit and confectionery-making have been gnawing away at foreign competition since the beginning of the year, while fruit juices and milk — but not dairy products — are also successful.

Alcohol and tobacco products will also profit from a state monopoly announced by Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov.

These sectors, which have managed to attract foreign investors such as Mars, Danone, Par-

malat and RJ Reynolds, remain very limited however.

The situation is less optimistic in other entire sectors of the economy.

The building industry, including cement production and piping, is incapable of bouncing back. It functions at a loss and ageing conglomerates survive only by barter.

In the agricultural and food-production sector the situation borders on the absurd.

Russia imports 50 per cent of its foodstuffs. Even Russian sausages, which flourished in the Soviet era, will have trouble regaining their former predominance, with livestock depleted and most meat imported.

Russia would need to double the number of its current 50 million cows and pigs for meat production to get back on its feet, which the weekly paper Dyengi said would take a dozen years.

Even if, by magic, such results could be

achieved, there would be no way to feed the livestock: while the nation was eating the animals to survive the last decade, grain harvests have crashed along with the Soviet Union.

The grain harvest this year was 55 million tonnes, just enough to feed the Russian people, said Leonid Chechinski, president of the Roshk-leprodukt baking ingredients company.

To reach the production levels of the heyday of the Soviet Union would mean buying thousands of combine harvesters, fertilising vast tracts of land and building new grain silos. But where would the money come from?

Russia's national electrical goods production is almost virtually non-existent. With the exception of television sets and refrigerators, the market is contracting under pressure from Korean imports, while neighbouring Ukraine and Belarus are also making inroads on the market. As for washing machines, Dyengi reported

that "the only quality national factory, Vesta, went bankrupt a year and a half ago."

Most textile factories from the Soviet era have also shut down. Those that remain use imported materials but turn out inferior quality goods in the face of tough competition from factories in Asia, an economist said.

Russian production, now only 40 per cent of its Soviet-era capacity, and 30 per cent in the light industry sector, will be hit hard by the current economic crisis.

"The relaunch of Russian production cannot take place without foreign investment," an analyst stressed.

"In place of high-quality, expensive Western goods, the market will be invaded by Asian products. And then our producers will be shut down," predicted Dyengi.

Instead of Italian pasta, tomorrow's Russians will be eating Chinese noodles.

German elections

A life devoted to power

Profile of Helmut Kohl, the German Chancellor, by Patricia Clough

ONE LATE summer afternoon, after his first day at school, a small runt of a boy called Helmut brought a crowd of his new classmates back home with him. With Helmut at their head, they swarmed up to the attic, dragged down an old kneading trough, launched it on a nearby pond and happily paddled round it for hours. From that day on, his older sister Hildegard recalled many years later, the boys all followed him.

Before long, Helmut could be seen strutting around the garden with a teacup on his head and a sheet round his shoulders, playing a favourite game. He was a bishop, and his friends were dutifully carrying his train.

Looking back now, it is clear that from his very earliest years the whole mainspring of Helmut Kohl's being was a colossal, all-absorbing drive for power, which nothing and no-one has yet been able to stop, and may still be unable to stop, even after 16 years of power.

Yet, open and uncomplicated though he is, many Germans have never quite grasped what makes him tick, for all the feeling that he has had his day. Even today, people can still marvel that a man of his limited talents can make it to the top and hang on for so long, let alone become arguably one of the greatest of Chancellors Germany has had since Bismarck, reuniting his country and forcing the pace of European unification through monetary union.

For when Germans think of the ideal qualities for a leader, Kohl never seems to fit the bill. He is a not a great mind, he is a mediocre speaker, he has no charisma, he does not inspire people, his image in the media has often been dismal. He is not a man of whom his contemporaries have often been proud. But Kohl does not care.

Ever since his schooldays, in the Rhineland town of Ludwigshafen, Kohl has been perfecting the art of power. Although for some years the smallest in the class, he shot up suddenly at 15 to become the tallest of them all. He quickly made himself the leader, organising pranks and projects, mediating in the disputes, helping weaker members, acting as their spokesman towards the staff, and playing for the local amateur football team.

In those days, he might use his fists to make a point and when, at the age of 16, he began cutting his teeth in Christian Democrat politics, brawls with the rival Social

Democrats were part of the fun. Even now he is not above simply towering menacingly over a troublemaker, using his sheer physical size to cow him or her into submission.

Yet two fundamental experiences ensured that Kohl sought and achieved power by developing great skills of conciliation and mediation demanded by West Germany's consensus. One was his devastating personal experiences of the war, in which his elder brother was killed, when he was a young teenager. The other was going to Sunday seminars held by a far-sewing Ludwigshafen priest who trained promising lads in the principles and practice of democracy. Narrow he may be, but those experiences ensured that he had the vision when it mattered, to reunite Germany, and to lock that reunification to a Europe of increasing integration.

The young Kohl had no political patron: He accumulated power entirely by trusting his own gut instincts. His technique was to woo supporters among the young, march them into local party meetings and get older rivals eliminated and himself elected to office. He would use that office to spread his vast capillary network of contacts, allies and informers, who to this day warn him of trouble, and through whom he absorbs the mood of the country. He would use each office to gain experience, defeat rivals, dispense patronage to gain others' loyalty, and win election to higher office. Step by step, he climbed the ladder, through local, district and eventually regional politics, always seeking party, rather than public office (he could rise faster that way) until, at the age of 39, he emerged triumphant with the top job — he became the prime minister of Rhineland-Palatinate.

Within seven years, he had transformed his impoverished backwater into a thriving, go-ahead region. His reforms became models for others to copy, his success an inspiration for his party. And yet, when in 1976 he became the leader of the CDU opposition in Bonn, many, even in his own party, sneered. "That provincial politician," spat a high official in

the SPD government. "Those naïf suits, that dreadful accent, that self-satisfied smile. Ugh!"

Few cared about Kohl's record back home. In that political village accustomed to the charismatic Willy Brandt, the Social Democrat leader, the arch-conservative Chancellor Helmut Schmidt, and their retinues of high-powered intellectuals, his homespun ways seemed laughable. He became, and remained for years, the butt of endless jokes.

Few ordinary mortals could have survived the searing derision, the humiliations and the bitter defeats that Kohl suffered, yet he shrugged them off with apparent indifference. For his ambition was coupled with an absolute and unshakable belief in himself. He called it "das hinten rauskommen" — roughly translated as "the bottom line." And the bottom line of all was winning elections.

Now, no-one laughs at Kohl. His astonishing feat in pushing through the reunification of Germany in 1990, in the brief window of time that it was possible, has given him the stature he always felt was his due. His current leadership of the drive towards monetary union has given him the statesmanship he has longed for, while his extraordinary resilience, as he pursues an unprecedented fifth term as chancellor in the elections next weekend, has marked him as a man that still can't be dismissed.

Back in 1976, only Willy Brandt did not laugh. "Do not underestimate Helmut Kohl," he warned. He had recognised Kohl's ambition. But he had also spotted another, almost unbeatable, strength: The fact that Kohl is, and insists on remaining, the archetypal ordinary German. He talks like ordinary Germans, he thinks like them, he behaves like them, he lives and operates on their wavelength. His instinct for what they want — not what the chattering classes or his more sophisticated political colleagues want — has time and again saved his career. If he wins again in the elections today, long after his political era has passed away, it will be because, once again, Germans feel they need the safety, comfort and reassurance of someone like them.

His ordinariness is totally unfaked, yet he also cultivates it. He has always stubbornly refused to "improve" himself, beyond the odd change in his hairstyle or spectacles. He has made no attempt to drop the heavy accent of the Palatinate, which is about as pleasing to German ears as Liverpoolian to British ones. Privately, he is extremely cultivated, a voracious reader and seeker-out of writers and thinkers who interest him, but he keeps it to himself. His remarks in the public arena are undemandingly banal.

His enemies can dismiss him as provincial, and mock him as "der Olgessheimer," intending it to hurt. Kohl takes it as a great compliment. After all, the vast majority of Germans are provincial too. It is the kindly, honest, sociable people of the Palatinate, and their straightforward values, that have the greatest influence on Kohl. The comments of old schoolmates, local clergy, buddies he sweats with in the local sauna on a Saturday, can sway him more than any dossier in Bonn. Like a tree, Kohl draws his strength from his roots.

He functions through people. If he thinks of war, he thinks of the death of his beloved soldier brother, Walter. If he speaks of a social problem, it will be about the case of some person who suffers from it. He is constantly on the phone, seeking opinions from contacts, chewing over problems with presidents and prime ministers. He has an elephantine memory for names and faces. If he had not made an effort to make friends with George Bush and Mikhail Gorbachev (although not, despite his best efforts, with Margaret Thatcher, who remained resistant to his provincialism and his gargantuan appetite), if they had not known, liked and trusted him, the reunification of Germany would have been impossible.

His favourite relaxation is not the opera or a concert, but — in typical Palatinate style — good wine and plenty of heavy, traditional food, with friends or aides late in the evening after work. It is then, his associates say, that Kohl is at his best.

For many years, Kohl vowed that he would relinquish power of his own volition when the right moment came. Yet that moment never seemed to come. Once again, Kohl is bawling for power.

If he is defeated, he will probably pursue some activity suitable for an elder statesman. But, after over 60 years in which power has been his life's blood, one would not care to be Helmut Kohl the morning after the power has gone.

— The Independent

Kohl and Schroeder go east

By Robert Mahoney
Reuters

THE LAST TIME Helmut Kohl spoke before the bomb-blackened ruins of Germany's finest Protestant church the warmth of the crowds inspired him to rapidly join communist east with capitalist west Germany.

This time the shell of the Frauenkirche (Church of Our Lady) is clamped in scaffolding, testimony to the rebuilding of the east that the chancellor began after reunification in 1990.

But this time boos and whistles peppered the applause that greeted the man who is running for a record fifth consecutive term today.

The crowd was only a fifth of that

which filled the square on December 19, 1989, calling for one Germany in the heady days after the fall of the Berlin Wall.

Kohl was undaunted. His advisers tell him the five eastern states hold the key to the election and his conservative Christian Democrats (CDU) are still trailing the centre-left Social Democrats (SPD). He needs to press the flesh to lift the CDU vote in the east above 30 per cent.

Emerging from his black Mercedes Kohl strode over to the protesters to shake hands. An egg flew. Bodyguards steered him back to the enclosure of CDU supporters he is to address.

To cries of "Helmut, Helmut" the 68-year-old passed through the crowd, showing no signs of fatigue from a punishing round of rallies and speeches.

The man who has led Germany for 16 years is still lagging behind his SPD challenger Gerhard Schroeder, 54. But his aim is not to look like a loser. More than a quarter of voters still say they are undecided and Kohl wants their vote.

"I would like to greet our political opponents," he said through a sound system that is so loud some listeners had to cover their ears.

Members of the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS) at the back of the crowd waved their red flags all the more furiously as if to compensate for their whistling being drowned out.

The chancellor barely glanced at his notes during his 90-minute address. The theme has been the same for

weeks, with variations only for the location.

In the east, Kohl has stressed his record in overseeing the net transfer of 900 billion marks (\$536.7 billion) from the West to rebuild smogstack industries and the decaying infrastructure.

This night he repeatedly used the Frauenkirche, destroyed by British and American firestorm bombing in 1945 and left untouched during the communist era, as a symbol of Germany's economic and political resurgence.

A vote for Schroeder and his left-wing allies the Greens would jeopardise the work of the past eight years, Kohl says.

A so-called Red-Green alliance of the SPD and the ecologist party would

even in places like Dresden, the state capital of Saxony, a relatively prosperous region south of Berlin with a CDU government.

In unemployment blackspots around Berlin CDU support has fallen below 20 per cent, half that of the SPD.

Schroeder, the self-styled man at the "new centre" of German politics, is out to capitalise on this, especially since polls nationally show his lead over Kohl in the final week down to as little as two percentage points.

"Kohl has forgotten how to bring easterners and westerners together," Schroeder tells a crowd of 8,000 in the eastern city of Leipzig. The applause is polite rather than impassioned for the man who is credited with being a better television performer than Kohl.

"We will put Kohl out to retire on September 27," Schroeder says in a speech that is an hour shorter than Kohl's address the previous evening in Dresden.

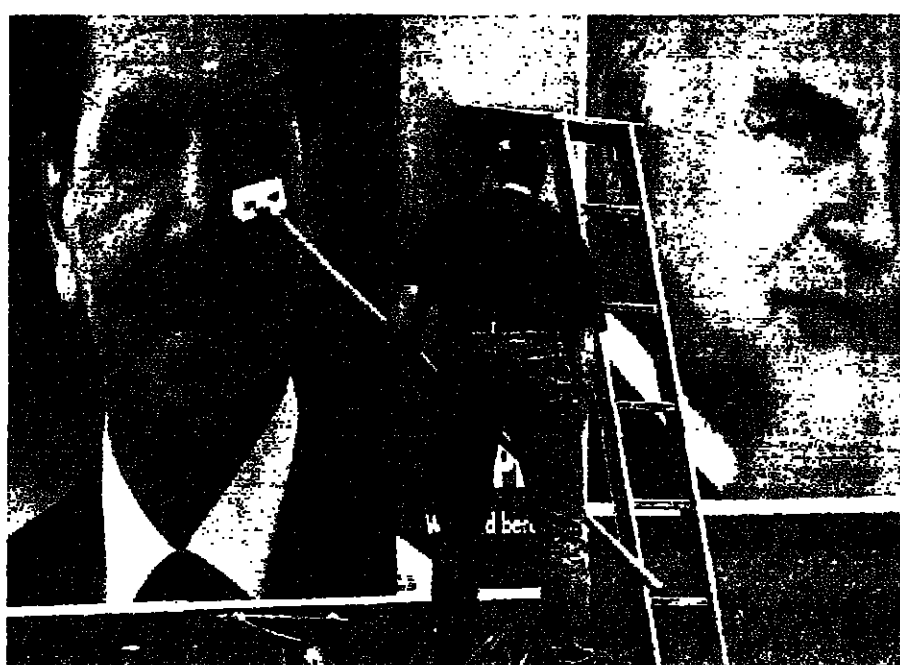
Schroeder now avoids going in to the details of the new centre, a pro-business agenda that set him apart from mainstream SPD thinking. In the final weeks of campaign he has edged left, addressing core SPD voters.

His message in the east is above all that a vote for the PDS is a wasted vote.

Pollsters estimate that the PDS can damage Schroeder more than Kohl by robbing a Red-Green alliance of the leftist votes it would need to form a government. Neither main party is expected to win enough votes to govern alone.

If the reformed communists retain at least three of their four Bundestag (lower house) seats, the election could return a hung parliament, with the SPD forced to form a grand coalition with the CDU. Schroeder says he would lead such a coalition. Kohl has said he would step aside.

"As far as the coalition arithmetic is concerned," says political analyst Bernd Wessels of Berlin's Free University, "the election will be decided in the East. The losses of the CDU will be heavy, but not so heavy as to give the SPD a clear win."



Ulrich Peters fixes an election poster showing Social Democrat chancellor candidate Gerhard Schroeder next to a poster showing German Chancellor Helmut Kohl. Germany will vote for a new parliament in general elections today (Reuters photo)

German pogo anarchists ease voter fatigue

By Tara FitzGerald
Reuters

AGROUP of tattooed punks stands outside a shabby-looking hall swigging beers and chanting "Never work again."

A loud cheer goes up as fresh alcohol supplies arrive and the chant changes to "Boozing, boozing, every day just boozing."

It may sound more like a rowdy youth protest party than support for a political party, but the distinction becomes somewhat blurred with Germany's Anarchistic Pogo Party (APPD).

For Germans suffering from election fatigue a before the national polls, the APPD could be just the breath of fresh air they need in a worthy, but not always inspiring, campaign.

The APPD advertises itself as a party for non-voters and its brand of brutal honesty and cynicism towards mainstream politics is laced with a sense of humour that could appeal to those disillusioned by everyday politicking.

"We are struggling for the total and ultimate dumbing down of mankind," APPD founder Karl Nagel told Reuters in an interview.

The APPD kicked off the so-called "hot phase" of

its campaign for the September 27 vote in the western German city of Duesseldorf under the slogan "Brainwashing '98 — vote APPD."

The party's prediction that the event would "dissolve into lustful and excessive orgies" did not come to pass.

But judging by both this event and footage of previous ones it is common for leading members of the party to strip naked while giving speeches and even mime sexual antics on stage.

As for policies, unemployment is a key theme for the APPD just as it is for all Germany's mainstream parties — but with the campaign slogan "Work is shit" it is not job creation schemes that concern their supporters.

"We pogo anarchists are realists. We know that most of the five million unemployed will never find work again. Therefore we demand no work and call for money and power instead," the APPD says in campaign leaflets.

The APPD, whose origins are rooted in the punk movement, was originally founded in Hanover in 1981 by Nagel, 37, and now has its headquarters in the northern German city of Hamburg.

But despite almost two decades in existence this year marks the party's federal election debut.

Nagel, who is also the APPD's chancellor candidate, said the party had around 730 members before the start of their campaign and that this number was rising.

The APPD, not to be confused with the APD or German Party of Car Drivers which is also standing, says it is putting up some 130 candidates in nine of Germany's 16 states.

Expectations of how many votes they could capture are low-key even among APPD members, who say they know their supporters too well to predict more.

"One of the reasons we don't expect to get a very good turnout is that all our supporters will be at pre-election piss-ups the night before polling day, so we expect many of them to be too hungover to actually vote," said one high-level party member at the Duesseldorf rally.

But there is some motivation to vote — the APPD has promised that if it manages to win 0.5 per cent in the poll and so reclaim its election costs this money will then be returned to its voters in the form of a gigantic free beer festival.

"We want to give our voters a chance to get something back for their efforts, but also to show them what the end result of an election is — a mountain of junk and rubbish," Nagel said.

Other central pledges include: the abolition of traditional schooling, the right to be unemployed on a full salary, pensions for young people rather than old, dissolution of the police force, legalising drugs and closing down prisons.

They also advocate an end to traditional Bundestag parliamentary debate and the introduction of Bundestag talkshows where politicians would be encouraged to reveal juicy tidbits about their sex lives.

But it is not all sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll. They may be anarchists by name but some serious organisation has gone into their election campaign.

As well as bringing its own brand of politics and rally style to some 40 cities across Germany in the run-up to the election, the APPD has a 50-page manifesto detailing their carefully thought-out campaign pledges.

The party has its own website and telephone information line and is also putting out party political broadcasts on national radio and television.

It boasts its own range of election merchandise which seems to accompany any modern, self-respecting political party, including posters, T-shirts, badges, CDs and videos.

Nagel said it was mostly through sales of this merchandise and party membership fees that the APPD

funded itself.

The APPD is not the only fringe party. A total of 43 parties are fighting this year from both sides of the political spectrum, and some are off the scale altogether.

They provide a welcome change from heavy-duty campaigning by the main political players, Chancellor Helmut Kohl's Christian Democrats (CDU) and the centre-left Social Democrats (SPD).

Among them is the Natural Law Party, which says it could cut 600 billion marks (\$360 billion) a year off the federal budget through policies based on yogic flying and transcendental meditation.

Also putting up candidates are "The Women," a feminist party in which men are banned; the Animal Protection Party and the Pro-DM party, devoted to saving the deershead from extinction and fighting the single European currency.

The APPD is one of the most colourful and its attraction lies partly in the fact that even party candidates do not take themselves or other politicians very seriously.

"The APPD is a completely normal party," Nagel told the crowds crammed into the dingy hall in Duesseldorf. "Just like the CDU and the SPD are completely normal parties."

Greenspan takes lead to save world economy

WASHINGTON (R) — There is nothing like a few choice words from Federal Reserve (Fed) Chairman Alan Greenspan to reassure the world that Washington is serious about taking the lead role in saving the global economy from collapse.

When the world's most powerful central banker signalled to U.S. lawmakers on Wednesday that he may cut key interest rates in response to mounting international turmoil, his message was clear: Something has to be done right away to put an end to the firestorm that is threatening to engulf the globe.

"Greenspan, more than any other central banker around the world, understands that this is a global liquidity crisis that will deepen and will assuredly hurt all the major economies," said Catherine Mann, a former Federal Reserve economist and now a senior fellow at the Institute for International Economics.

"He is taking on a role as

a global financial leader," she emphasised.

Greenspan is facing little, if any, competition for that role: Japan, along with the rest of Asia, is stuck in a painful recession. Most of Washington's key partners in Europe — prime among them Germany — are preoccupied with laying the foundations for a single currency and have stated clearly that they do not plan to cut rates any time soon.

Even within the narrow confines of Washington, the 72-year-old Greenspan seems to be the only one left who can make a credible case that he is capable of taking charge.

U.S. President Bill Clinton is hobbled by a sex-and-perjury scandal. Meanwhile the U.S. Treasury Department, headed by veteran Wall Street pro Robert Rubin, is fighting an uphill struggle to get congressional approval for his bid to get fresh funds for the cash-strapped International Monetary Fund.

Only 10 days ago the

Group of Seven (G-7) major industrial nations boosted market hopes for a joint rate cut — a move that could help stem the flight of capital out of battered emerging markets and into less risky U.S. assets — by alluding to the need for "close cooperation" among major economies.

But hopes that the club of rich nations would actually get its act together and agree on a joint easing move were quickly quashed when European central bankers, led by German Bundesbank President Hans Tietmeyer, stressed they saw no need for a cut because their domestic situations did not warrant such a move.

In congressional testimony just two days after the G-7 statement, Greenspan dealt the final blow to any vision of G-7 coordination when he acknowledged there was no such effort.

"The Europeans underestimate substantially the impact of the crisis on economic activity," said Mann.

"This is Europe's first opportunity to act as a global player, to look beyond just their narrow self interest. This is a global crisis."

If anybody needed a reminder of the potential impact of the crisis on economies and financial systems everywhere, the near-collapse of a major U.S. hedge fund, Long-Term Capital Management L.P. drove home the dangers of financial contagion.

The fund required a \$3.75 billion bailout by 15 banks, coordinated by New York Federal Reserve Bank, after severe losses had drained its capital. Bank shares across Europe tumbled as creditors revealed hefty exposures to the fund.

Sure, Europe has come up with a laundry list of ideas on how to improve the workings of the IMF — most recently from Britain and France — but there have been no signs yet that the continent is ready to back Greenspan's push for lower rates.

Asia and Latin America,

the latest region to feel the brunt of the financial storm, have all but given up hope for a coordinated move that could give them some much-needed breathing space, analysts said.

"They recognise that the Europeans won't go along," said Sung Won Sohn, chief economist at Minneapolis-based Norwest Corp.

"They're hanging all their hopes on Greenspan." They will have to wait until Tuesday's meeting of the Fed's rate-setting committee to find out whether Greenspan will actually deliver what he signalled. But even a small cut in the key overnight federal funds rate from its current level of 5.5 per cent would help to underpin his global leadership role.

The issue is not so much the size of the cut but the fact that somebody as credible as Greenspan is doing something," said Sohn. "The signal is much more important than the size."

World Bank guards AAA rating as loan demand soars

WASHINGTON (R) — The World Bank said this week it had taken action to guard its perfect credit rating after record lending to Asia's battered economies and it promised a cautious policy as demand for money soars.

Top officials said the bank had already set aside \$750 million of net income from fiscal year 1998 to bolster reserves, to take account of the risks associated with its multibillion-dollar loans in Asia.

"We've protected all our ratings," World Bank Vice President Mark Malloch Brown told a news conference, releasing the bank's 1998 annual report. "The markets have no cause for alarm."

The World Bank's AAA credit rating, the highest offered by international rating agencies, was "vital to the quality and effectiveness of our operations and to the cost of our borrowing," he added.

"Any additional activity we undertake must be within the existing prudent limits to risk," Malloch Brown stressed.

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The annual report said the World Bank made the largest new loan commitments in its history in the fiscal year to June 30, 1998, with pledges totalling nearly \$29 billion, including \$16

billions to crisis-ravaged Asian states in support of rescue packages put together by the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

By the end of the fiscal year, \$5.65 billion of this money to Asia had been paid out.

The big hike in lending hit the World Bank's net income for 1998, which fell to \$1.24 billion from \$1.29 billion in 1997.

A far more dramatic drop in income was reported by the International Finance Corporation (IFC), the bank's private sector lending arm, where net income almost halved to \$246 million from \$432 million in 1997.

Since June 30, the World Bank has pledged billions of dollars more to Russia, in the grips of its own crisis, and it might soon announce billions of dollars in new loans for Brazil and other Latin American economies caught up in the contagion.

Demand on the bank's resources have shifted dramatically over the past year, with a greater focus on structural adjustment lending, used to support broad economic policy reform — usually the IMF's domain.

Structural adjustment lending rose to \$8.29 billion

in fiscal year 1998, from \$1.30 billion in 1997 and \$350 million in 1996.

The World Bank denied the increase in adjustment lending was due to a cash shortage at the IMF, which has been warning for months that its cash reserves were nearly depleted.

"When we see ourselves as getting involved in these emergencies, it is not in any way substitute or supplement the IMF's crisis management role," Malloch Brown said.

He said the World Bank was financially sound, despite rising pressure on margins.

The bank's board has already agreed to a higher fee structure for loans to "start to improve our net income position," Malloch Brown said. The World Bank could also increase the amount it borrows on capital markets.

But Malloch Brown said future loan programmes must not overexpose the bank and put its credit rating at risk.

"Our arguments to our owners going forward is: We will continue to be conservative...because...the cost in terms of damage to our standing in the market would be extraordinary," he said.

New mobile-phone service likely to be launched in spring

By Ahmed Naser

AMMAN — A new mobile-phone service provider owned by the government is expected to launch its services around May of next year, according to Director Khamis Wadi.

In February, the Jordan Telecommunications Company (JTC) established a new division, which will be the future competitor to Fastlink that started the service in 1995.

According to Wadi, operations are expected to start in April or May, and a bid for infrastructure equipment, mainly a Master Switching Centre, will be delayed until the new company is licensed after the end of Fastlink's exclusivity next month.

"We do not want to put out a JD30 million bid, without being sure that we will be allowed to operate," said Wadi.

The services of the new company, Wadi said, is expected to cover all major towns within four months and the rest of Jordan — mainly highways — within another two months, according to the plan set by the division and its Finnish consultant, Omnitele.

This is an "optimistic" time-frame, concedes Wadi, but he believes that the partnership with Omnitele will facilitate the plan.

"We are working very closely with Omnitele...to ensure that their experience is handed down [to us]," said Wadi, adding that Omnitele had given the new division three years worth of experience, in the last six months.

On an administrative and financial level, the company will be completely independent from JTC, which will be the major shareholder, he said.

Similar to Fastlink, the company will pay JD7 million for a licence, interconnect rates and 20 per cent revenue sharing, according to Wadi. "We will not benefit in any way by being owned by JTC," he stressed.

The company will, however, market itself through the JTC's outlets. "Anyone who hears about us when we launch, will immediately go to JTC's customer service departments. As such it is natural that we start offering our services through these outlets," said Wadi.

REUTERS • REUTERS

The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NLG	FRF
US Dollar	1.0000	1.6800	0.6933	0.7036	136.10	1.1222	1660.00	1.8944	5.2060
DE Mark	0.5952	1.0000	0.3502	0.3260	81.00	0.8999	937.80	1.1276	3.2487
GB Sterling	1.6800	2.8333	1.0000	0.2670	231.18	2.5685	2919.51	3.2178	9.5658
CH Franc	0.7206	1.2098	0.4238	1.0000	98.03	1.0889	1195.36	136.42	4.0913
JP Yen	0.0073	1.2339	0.4323	1.0192	1.0000	1.1107	12.19	139.14	4.1322
CA Dollar	0.6813	1.2916	0.4225	1.0666	1.11	1.0000	1270.80	1.4651	4.3286
IT Lira	0.0006	1.0120	0.3545	0.0636	1221.00	0.9109	1.0000	11.41	3.3690
NL Guilder	0.6279	88.66	0.3106	73.28	71.80	0.7980	876.04	1.0000	2.9600
FR Franc	0.1777	0.2985	0.1046	24.6571	24.17	0.2687	33.66	33.6600	1.0000

Middle Eastern Currencies									
Currency	USD	JOD	SAR	BAH	QAT	KUW	AED	LBP	EGP
US Dollar	1.0000	0.7090	3.7505	0.3770	3.6399	0.3037	3.6728	1511.00	3.4080
Jordan Dinar	1.4104	1.0000	5.2898	0.5317	5.1339	0.4293	5.1803	2131.17	4.8025
Saudi Riyal	0.2666	0.1890	1.0000	0.1005	0.97	0.8010	0.96	402.88	0.9079
Bahrain Dinar	2.65	1.8807	9.9488	1.0000	9.76	8.8058	9.74	4008.17	9.0323
Qatar Dinar	0.2747	0.1948	1.0304	1.0304	1.0000	0.8034	1.01	415.12	0.9355
Kuwait Dinar	3.2927	2.3346	12.3494	1.2413	11.99	1.00	12.09	4975.30	9.9355
Emirates Dinar	0.2723	0.1930	1.0212	1.0206	0.9910	0.8027	1.00	411.40	0.9271
Lebanese/1000	0.86	0.4692	2.4821	0.2495	2.4089	0.2010	2.4307	1000.00	2.2635
Egyptian	0.2837	0.2082	1.1015	0.1107	1.0690	0.0892	1.0788	443.78	1.0000

Energy									
Oil	Last	Previous	Mid-East Currencies						
Brent	0.00	0.00	Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	
WTI	15.76	15.95	SA Riyal	0.2686	0.4481	0.1668	0.37027	36.3014	
Bonny	0.00	0.00	AE Dirham	0.2723	0.45756	0.1663	0.3781	37.07	
Dubai	14.23	13.87	KW Dinar	3.2927	5.63403	1.93874	4.57247	448.229	
UL Gas	138.00	138.00	BH Dinar	0.3770	4.48831	1.58177	3.68324	361.141	
			CY Pound	2.0069	3.3695	1.1806	2.7836	273.003	

Metal Prices									
Metal	Bid	Offer	Libor Fixing						
Gold (oz's)	294	294.5	Period	-1-	-3-	-6-	12-	Year	
Silver (oz's)	5.16	5.19	Cncy	Month	Months	Months	Months		
Platinum (oz's)	362	364	USD	5.3967	5.3125	5.2500	5.0625		
AL (3 Months)	1344	1347	GBP	7.4375	7.3789	7.2500	6.9375		
CU (3 Months)	1666	1670	JPY	0.4453	0.4414	0.4806	0.4806		
Zinc (3 Months)	996	1000	DEM	3.4898	3.5000	3.6825	3.5820		
Lead (3 Months)	527	531	FRF	1.3750	1.4648	1.6250	1.6875		
Ni (3 Months)	4120	4150	CHF	3.5000	3.5313	3.5723	3.6016		
			ITL	4.9890	4.7980	4.3250			

Main Equity Indices									
Bourse	Index	Value	Chng	% Chng	High	Low	Pr Cls		
New York	DOW JONES	8028.77	25.78	0.33	8088.44	7889.99	8001.99		
New York	S&P 500	1044.75	2.03	0.19	1051.89	1028.49	1042.72		
London	FT-SE 100	5061	-106.6	-2.06	5136.9	5016	5167.6		
Tokyo	NIKKEI 225	13723.84	-481.94	-3.39	14057.9	13675.8	14206.9		
Paris	CAC 40	3310.89	-70.64	-2.09	3326.34	3240.81	3381.13		
Frankfurt	DAX	4561.58	-84.57	-1.82	4675.44	4481.88	4648.25		

Energy									
Commodity	Last	Delivery	JOD Cross Rates						
Coffee (c/lbs)	104.33	Spot	Currency	Buy	Sell				
Cocoa (\$/ton)	1932	Spot	US Dollar	0.708	0.710				
Sugar (\$/ton)	213.1	Spot	GB Sterling	1.2016	1.2076				
Wheat (\$/ton)	103	Spot	DE Mark	0.4207	0.4228				
Soya (c/lbs)	24.98	Spot	CH Franc	0.6102	0.6128				
Tea (c/lbs)	125	Spot	FR Franc	0.1257	0.1263				
Barley (\$/bsh)	0	Spot	JP Yen	0.0198	0.0204				
Rice (\$/ton)	415	Spot	NL Guilder	0.3731	0.378				
			IT Lira	0.4261	0.4282				

* Source: Central Bank of Jordan.

Blood Donation at Le Meridien

A BLOOD donation camp was organised in cooperation between the Blood Bank, MOH & Le Meridien Hotel in Amman. Through this coordination the hotel facilitates the procedures of blood donation and enabled the staff to participate in this humanitarian effort.



THE Daily Crossword Edited by Wayne Robert Williams

ACROSS

- 1 Ratchet part
- 5 Muhammad and Mehmet
- 9 Extinct birds
- 14 Jet
- 15 Babble enthusiastically
- 18 Concerning
- 17 Mistake
- 18 Part of A.D.
- 19 Sister's daughter
- 20 Risky issue to deal with
- 22 Bridge expert
- 23 Anchors
- 24 Brick oven
- 26 Tabula
- 29 Pawn-shop deal
- 33 "La Vita"
- 37 German auto maker
- 39 Nautical speed
- 40 Region
- 41 India's wardrobe
- 42 Early Peruvian
- 43 Stern section
- 44 Mine car
- 45 Slow mover
- 46 Cowboy's parking lot?
- 48 Wife of Jacob
- 50 Olfactory stimulant
- 52 Crownlets
- 57 Struck
- 60 Sidney Howard play
- 63 Segments
- 64 Avant-garde art movement
- 65 Words of comprehension
- 66 Fancy cravat
- 67 Corrida cheers
- 68 September's number
- 69 Configuration
- 70 News-hounds' organ
- 71 Toothed device

DOWN

- 1 Turkish official
- 2 Permit
- 3 Ralph or John
- 4 Fila Filipo
- 6 Writer Christie
- 8 Our moon
- 7 "It"
- 8 Romantic?
- 8 Quivered
- 9 Hang loosely
- 10 Thin paper
- 11 Moose's kin
- 12 To the past
- 13 "Nana" star
- 21 Fairy-tale monster
- 25 Showy flower
- 27 Moselle
- 28 Of the ear
- 30 First name of 13D
- 31 Focal points
- 32 And others, in brief
- 33 St. Jeanne
- 34 Sandwich cookie
- 35 Sonnet's father
- 36 Roosevelt coin
- 37 Town near Caen
- 45 Something to bark
- 47 "Fidels"
- 48 Relaxing
- 49 Gaseous element
- 53 Getting an A
- 54 Comic
- 55 Sports venue
- 56 Poo-poo
- 57 Health resorts
- 58 Pound to a pulp
- 59 Killer whale
- 61 "Symphonie Espagnole" composer
- 62 of March

Peanuts

YOU HAVE TO GO TO SCHOOL TOMORROW... YOU CAN'T HIDE UNDER YOUR BED...

SCHOOL ISN'T SO BAD... THINK OF ALL THE THINGS YOU'RE GOING TO LEARN...

WHO ARE YOU TALKING TO?

Andy Capp

STOP INVADE MY HOME AND STOP CRITICIZING

JUST WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE?

ZIMBARWANDA WITH COAST GUARD BOATS FOR POLICE

Mutt'n'Jeff

MUTT, I GOT A HUNCH! ALL NIGHT I'VE BEEN DREAMING ABOUT HATS! STRAW HATS, SILK HATS, FELTE, HOMBRES!

THE NEAREST THING TO A HAT IS A HORSE CALLED "CHECK ROOM"

WELL, LET'S BET ON HIM!

COME ON CHECK ROOM! COME ON--

AND THE WINNER IS SOMBRERO!

THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen

GIASBERGEN

"My sister and I have always been very competitive. She's sixteen months older than me, but I was born first."

JUMBLE

Unscramble these four jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

GEESI

NALST

SYTTUR

THUSIA

Ans: _____

Yesterday's Jumble: AWFUL FORGO BEHOLD ABUSED Answer: Easy to give a fast-talking artist — THE BRUSH-OFF

Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

Aqel's annual study ranks Export and Finance Bank as most efficient

Table with 3 columns: Bank Name, Assets, Liabilities. Rows include Aqel Bank, Export Bank, Finance Bank, etc.

THE EXPORT and Finance Bank topped the list of banks in terms of efficiency and net profit per employee last year, according to comparative study that Mufleh Aqel, regional director of the Arab Bank in Amman, prepares annually. The Export and Finance Bank also ranked first in terms of average return on assets (before tax), shareholders equity to deposits, growth of assets and growth of deposits.

Wider sectors of society are using mobile-phones

By Ahmed Naser

AMMAN — When Fastlink first launched its mobile-phone service here, only high income sectors of society subscribed. But now, after the awareness of the potential of cell-phones, lower income sectors have also reached out to make themselves on call 24-hours a day.

the ministry of finance to clarify this," said David Bosworth, Fastlink's Chief Executive Officer. On the level of additional services, when the first 10,000 Fastlink subscribers received their SIM cards in 1995, only four services were available: International dialling, call forwarding, call barring and detailed billing.

most expensive service offered. Its antidote, caller line identification restriction (CLIR), has not been marketed as aggressively, out of fear of harming Fastlink's share in caller I.D. subscriptions and is priced at JD20 to that end. The remaining services are provided at a rate of JD2.

the world, making Fastlink Iridium's first provider and reseller in Jordan. According to the agreement, Iridium subscribers' calls will be conducted through Fastlink's terrestrial network in Jordan, when Iridium subscribers are in Jordan. Operations are expected to commence before the end of the year.

when I first got here, 85 per cent of the handsets were coming through the black market and our first goal was to eliminate black market handsets to the best of our ability," Bosworth said. By reaching subsidy agreements with handset vendors, similar to practices by GSM operators all over the world, Fastlink forced the price of mobiles down to as low as JD70.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 1998

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) The party continues for most of the day. Go places, do things, have fun, but mostly bond with your significant other. If you don't have a true love, go where you're most likely to find one. Use the conditions in effect to your advantage. Don't just sit around and wait for love to come to you. You're a major player in this game.

Steel and iron firm runs into trouble

By Randa Nafsa

AMMAN — The government has appointed a committee to run Jordan's oldest steel and iron factory plagued by internal rivalries among the members of board of directors, officials and lawyers said Saturday.

and has earned profits in the past years and is expected to make profit this year as well. He declined to give figures on the factory's debts, but said "the company have enough assets to cover its debts."

JORDAN MARKETPLACE *** JORDAN MARKETPLACE *** JORDAN MARKETPLACE

DAJANI JEWELLERS "A CARNIVAL OF STYLE"

Advertisements for various services including: ART CENTER LEARN DRAWING CERAMICS SCULPTURE, STUDIO HAIG, V.I.P. GIFT, LEARN TO DRAW & PAINT, 24-HOUR TAXI SERVICE, LONDON TAXIS, AIRPORT SERVICE, Amira forum Hotel, Recreation Center, L'olivier Restaurant, and FOR RENT.

McGwire hits No. 66, ties Sosa

ST. LOUIS (AP) — Take that, Sammy. Again.

Forty-five minutes after Sammy Sosa took the major league home run lead with No. 66, Mark McGwire answered with his 66th. His two-run, fifth-inning shot in St. Louis' 6-5 victory over Montreal on Friday night tied the home run derby with just two games to go.

Although McGwire said yet again that he didn't care who wins, his manager would be crushed if McGwire didn't finish on top.

"As far as I'm concerned, Mark's home run chase is the most important thing the next two days," Tony La Russa said. "We're pulling for him real, real, real hard."

McGwire said that was the wrong attitude.

"That's just him," McGwire said. "My feeling is what he and I have done, whoever's on top nobody should be disappointed."

How can you walk away being disappointed if you walk away one below? You can't. It's impossible."

Shayne Bennett, who gave up No. 66 to McGwire, only hoped there would be more fireworks.

"I don't want to be the guy who gives up the last one," Bennett said. "If Sammy hits another one, they'll forget about me. C'mon, Sammy."

Sosa led for 58 minutes on Aug. 19 before McGwire hit his 48th and 49th homers at Chicago. Leading off the fourth at Houston, Sosa hit No. 66 off Jose Lima, and McGwire responded with a man on and two outs in the fifth with a 375-foot drive.

"It was almost as good as 62," La Russa said.

On the first pitch from Bennett, McGwire nearly homered on a towering drive that landed just to the left of the foul pole in the upper deck in left field. Busch Stadium personnel inadvertently set off fireworks.

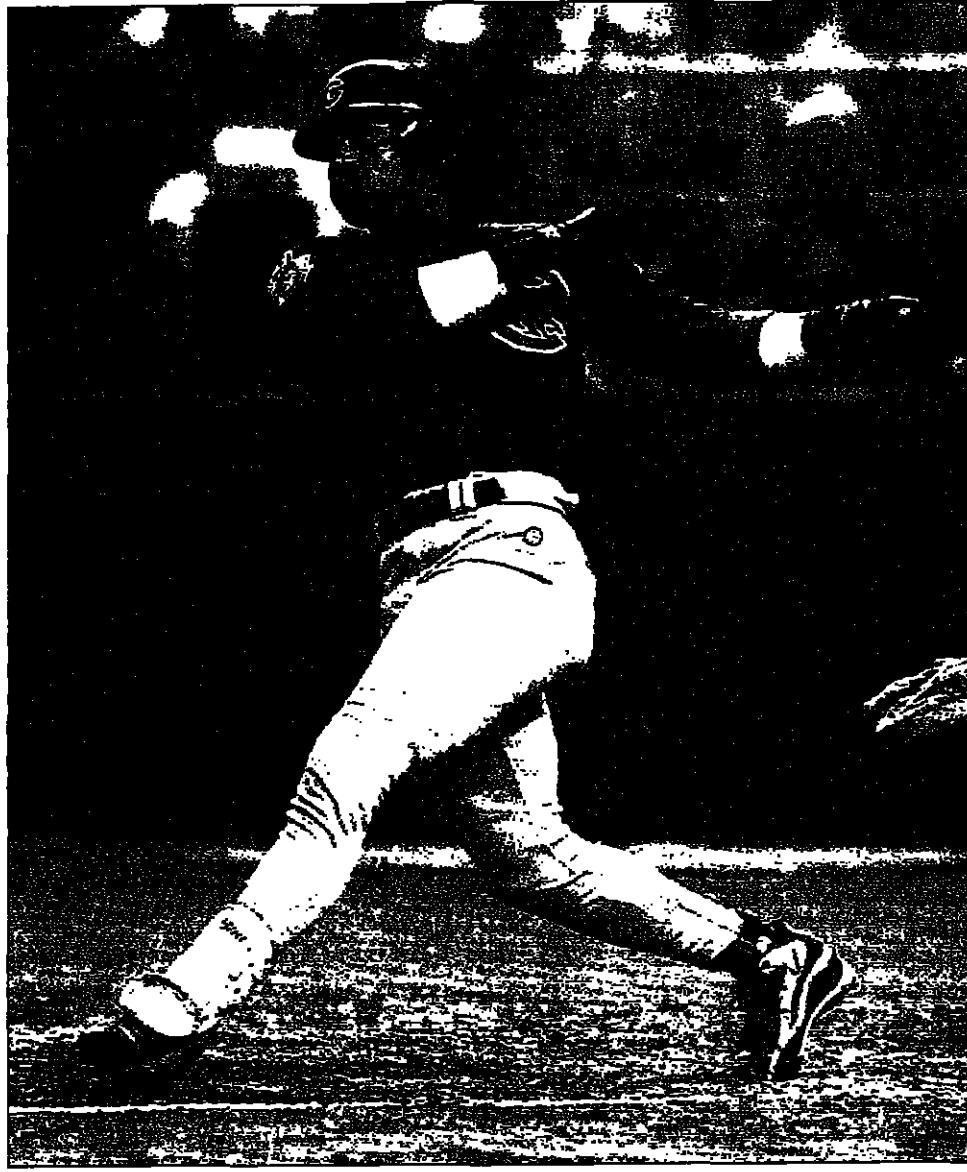
"False alarm," McGwire said with a grin. "The guy was trigger-happy."

Expos manager Felipe Alou thought the foul drive was even more impressive than the homer.

"I've never seen a fly ball go that far in my life," Alou said. "And I've been in many different leagues."

Rookie J.D. Drew had a pair of two-run homers for the Cardinals, who have won 10 of 12 to guarantee a winning record.

Drew, the Cardinals' first-round draft pick, has five homers and 12 RBIs since joining the team Sept. 8 — the day McGwire broke



Chicago Cub's Sammy Sosa hits his 66th home run of the season September 25 against the Houston Astros. St. Louis Cardinals Mark McGwire homered against the Montreal Expos less than hour after Sosa's blast, tying Sosa at 66 home runs on the season (Reuters photo)

Baseball Notes

The Cardinals set an attendance record of 3,100,699 with both remaining games also sold out.

Bennett had allowed only six homers in 91 innings before giving up the homers to McGwire and Drew in the fifth.

The Cardinals haven't permitted a homer in 87 innings since the first game of a doubleheader Sept. 15 against Pittsburgh.

The Cardinals lead the NL with 218 homers, six more than Atlanta. St. Louis last won the home run title in 1944 with 100.

Roger Maris' record with his 62nd homer.

"He's got a pretty good shot at breaking this record some day," McGwire said. "He's a lot farther along than I was at that age. It's going to be nice to play with him for a few years."

When Sosa took the lead in the home run derby, it prompted a collective groan from a sellout crowd at Busch Stadium who booed when Sosa's home run number was changed on the scoreboard.

Before connecting, McGwire had been 2-for-11 on the homestand with a pair

of singles and hadn't homered in 14 at-bats. He extended his NL record to 161 walks on a full count in the first and lined out to left in the third against Miguel Barista (3-6) and singled off rookie Kirk Bullinger to lead off the seventh.

McGwire and Sosa each have two games left, with McGwire's at home against the Expos and Sosa's on the road against the Astros. McGwire faces right-hander Dustin Hermanson (14-11) today, while Sosa faces right-hander Shane Reynolds (19-8). On Sunday, McGwire faces

Mike Thurman (4-5), and Sosa goes against Mike Hampton (11-7).

McGwire has two homers against Montreal, and this was his first since he connected off Trey Moore on April 21. Alou suspects McGwire may hit a few more off his largely inexperienced staff.

"We don't have Greg Maddux here who can pinpoint a fastball on the corner every time," Alou said. "We have kids. We have Mike Maddux."

The latest homer was No. 453 of McGwire's career, putting him in 20th place ahead of Carl Yastrzemski. He has hit 176 homers the last three seasons.

In 204 career games with the Cardinals, McGwire has 90 homers, 182 RBIs and 204 walks. He has 47 homers and 95 RBIs in 104 career games at Busch Stadium.

Rookie Jose Jimenez (3-0) allowed three runs in 6 1-3 innings and Juan Acevedo finished for his 14th save.

FIFA reduces time players must be released for Confederation Cup

ZURICH (AP) — The 2002 World Cup might begin earlier and feature a significant rules change designed to reduce the number of shootouts.

FIFA, soccer's world governing body, said Friday the 2002 event, with Japan and South Korea serving as hosts, would remain in the customary period of June and July, but may open earlier in June.

"Looking at meteorological studies from Japan and South Korea, we feel it should be scheduled as long as possible in June," said FIFA president Sepp Blatter.

While FIFA will decide on the actual dates at the executive committee meeting in December, not every one was convinced a move to a May kickoff was out of the question.

"In principle, it will be in June and July," said FIFA vice president Mong-Joon Chung, president of the Korean Football Association. "But there will be further consultations between FIFA and the two organizing committees to have further consideration of the date." South Korea requested the event begin in May to avoid the rainy season. The quadrennial, month-long competition traditionally has started around June 10,

well after the professional soccer seasons in Europe and South America end.

The International Football Association Board will discuss the committee's suggestion that two extra substitutes be permitted during overtime in World Cup matches. That might open up play in the extra sessions, which often are conservatively played and marred by the exhaustion of the players.

That, in turn, could lead to more games decided in overtime, avoiding shootouts. Only one game in France 98, when the hosts beat Paraguay 1-0, ended in overtime.

FIFA said it would not change the dates of the upcoming Confederation Cup, but would reduce the time clubs are required to make their players available.

"Clubs will no longer have to give up their players two weeks before the Confederation Cup," Blatter said. "Now we're requiring clubs to make their players available 48 hours before the first game of the competition." The United States, Mexico, Bolivia, Brazil, France, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and the winner of the current Oceania contest in Brisbane,

Australia, will participate in the eight-nation tournament. Scheduled for Mexico next Jan. 8-20 — when leagues in the southern hemisphere are in full swing and only some in Europe are off — several leagues will be left without their stars.

"We're willing to be flexible," said Blatter. "Now we ask clubs to understand other continents are also involved and insisted it not be scratched from the calendar." FIFA also discussed the dangers of the performance-enhancing substance EPO and the possibility of introducing blood tests rather than only urine tests, as well as random doping testing between competitions. The IOC set a forum for Oct. 27 in Lausanne, Switzerland, and invited all the international federations to exchange views.

Candidates to stage the 2006 World Cup will be accepted at the end of October, with bid countries required to confirm their bids by April 1999. Bids will be reviewed by Jan. 31, 2000 and the executive committee will select the host country in March 2000 — not in June, as previously planned.

Transatlantic swimmer arrives home in France

QUIBERON, France (AFP) — French swimmer Benoit "Ben" Lecomte was welcomed home here Friday after crossing the Atlantic from the United States.

His friends and relatives joined around 200 people on the beach here to welcome Lecomte, 31, who plunged into the Atlantic July 16 at Cape Cod for the challenge which raised funds for cancer research.

His marathon swim was interrupted every few hours for rest and food onboard the "Falbala" — his 12-metre (40-foot) escort boat.



Ali Benarbia (R) of Bordeaux takes on Dominique Arribage (L) of Rennes during early action in their French league match. Bordeaux won 4-0 (Reuters photo)

SPORTS IN BRIEF

200 football fans in clash near hockey stadium

MOSCOW (AFP) — More than two hundred fans of Moscow football clubs Spartak and CSKA were involved in clashes near a local ice hockey stadium, ITAR-TASS news agency reported on Saturday. Local police were unprepared for the disturbance, concentrating their forces near the Dynamo stadium, where a crucial match between the two top sides in the Russian football championship was scheduled later Saturday. Mounted police appeared at the battleground 15 minutes after the fighting began and broke up the gangs of roving fans. Moscow police said no serious injuries were reported.

1860 Munich maintain challenge

COLOGNE (AFP) — 1860 Munich maintained their superb start to the Bundesliga season with a 2-0 win at home to Hertha Berlin on Friday night. Moroccan midfielder Abderrahim Ouakili put 1860 ahead in only the second minute and Bernd Hobsch's goal just after half-time sealed the victory. 1860 Munich remain second in their best-ever start in the Bundesliga, two points behind local rivals Bayern Munich, who play Werder Bremen on Saturday. Hamburg SV laboured against nine man Hansa Rostock but finally came away 1-0 winners after Croatian Andrej Panadic scored in the 83rd minute. Rostock earlier had French defender Abder Randame red carded in the 17th minute while Croatian striker Igor Panic was sent off 45 minutes later. It was Rostock's third defeat in three away fixtures but the win propelled Hamburg into third place.

Keegan to return to Anfield

LONDON (AFP) — Fulham manager Kevin Keegan is set to make a nostalgic return to his former club Liverpool in the third round of the League Cup. Keegan's second division side, who beat Premiership club Southampton in the last round, were handed a daunting trip to Anfield when FIFA president Sepp Blatter made the third round draw on Saturday. Holders Chelsea, handed a bye into the third round like all of the English teams involved in European competition, entertain Aston Villa in one of four all-Premiership ties. High-flyers Derby take on Arsenal at Pride Park in the clash of the round while Leeds and Manchester United host local derbies against Bradford and Bury respectively.

Plenty of solitude at sea for skippers of eight-month-long yachting race

CHARLESTON, South Carolina (AP) — After years of planning, raising money and testing their yachts, 16 skippers set sail this weekend in a renewal of the 27,000-mile (43,450-kilometre) Around Alone single-handed yachting race.

"It's wonderful to be just flying on the boat," said Isabelle Autissier of France, the only female in the field. "I really like the balance between long periods at sea and pushing the boat."

Robin Davis said Friday he just couldn't think of anything better to do than spending eight months alone at sea.

"It's a great escape from reality," said the race veteran who will skipper a 49-foot (15-metres) yacht named South Carolina.

"I'm doing it for the money," laughed J.P. Moulligne, a Frenchman who lives in Rhode Island. "I was told you could get rich in this business. But it was like the movie Casablanca. I

was misinformed."

The race, previously known as the BOC Challenge, has been held every four years since 1982. Its starting point moved from Newport, Rhode Island, to Charleston in 1994.

Colorful flags on the yachts slapped in a brisk breeze as school children and tourists walked along the docks at the Charleston Maritime Center. A handful of sailors had their yachts in the harbor, doing some last-minute minute testing before the race start at noon today.

The course takes the sailors around the world with stops in Cape Town, South Africa; Auckland, New Zealand; and Punta del Este, Uruguay, before returning next spring.

Thirty-nine skippers originally registered, although only 16 will be starting, four fewer than four years ago. Some dropped out because they could not raise enough money.

Others ran into equipment problems

and one contestant was booted because he wanted to name his boat for a cigarette sponsor and refused to make a 2,000-mile (3,200-kilometre) qualifying sail.

Christophe Auguin of France, who won the past two races, is not back to defend his title in Class I — boats between 51 and 60 feet (15 to 17 metres). There are seven Class I competitors, while the rest of the field will compete in Class II, which includes yachts between 40 and 50 feet long (12 to 15 metres).

"It's a very special race, a very human race," said Giovanni Soldini of Italy, who placed second in Class II four years ago and has moved up to the larger class. "This is the second time and we'll see if we are there a third."

Some skippers seemed a bit awed by what they have undertaken.

"At the time it was a good idea," Canadian Sebastian Reid said. "I

went to bed last night and was thinking about it and I'm not so sure."

But he said the race in his 60-foot (17-metre) yacht Project Amazon is a challenge and "for once in my life, I would like to be among the best in the world."

Russian Fedor Konioukhov, who has climbed Mount Everest and is the first Russian to reach the North Pole alone, was preparing for his third solo around-the-world sail when he heard about the race and decided to enter.

Neal Petersen, a South African who has lived in Charleston since competing four years ago, said the Around Alone is all about setting goals and reaching them.

"In my mind, there are no barriers," said Petersen, who gives inspirational talks to school and corporate groups and whose yacht is named www.no-barriers.com. "This race is a tremendous risk. You make a mistake, you die."

TODAY AT	PHILADELPHIA '1'	PHILADELPHIA '2'	PLAZA	CONCORD	GALLERIA 1	GALLERIA 2	Fisham Yarns Theatre
	John Travolta & Olivia Newton-John .. in GREASE Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	Sophie Marceau ... in Leo Tolstoy's love story ANNA KARENINA Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	Comedian Adel Imam .. in AL ZA'EEM Shows: 6:30, 9:30 Additional shows Thursday and Friday evenings at 12:30	CONCORD '1' NASSER Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30 CONCORD '2' UP CLOSE & PERSONAL Shows: 3:30, 5:30 only	ABDOUN www.cns.com.jo/Galleria ARMAGEDDON Shows: 3:30, 6:00, 8:30, 10:45	ABDOUN www.cns.com.jo/Galleria GREAT EXPECTATIONS Shows: 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:45	Watch out for the new play

participate in the
moment. Scheduled
Jan. 8-20 — when
southern hemisphere
and only some to
— several leagues
out their stars
to be flexible" said
clubs to under-
in-ated it not be
the calendar. The
danger of the
substance. The
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tation doping test
repetition. The
Oct. 27 in Lou-
d invited all the
ations to evalu-

stage the Davis Cup
series at the side
and country. Re-
a bid by April 1999
reviewed by Jan 11
executive committee
most country in Mex-
a June 20 previous

re L. of Rennes date
4-11 Reuters photo

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SCOREBOARD

National League

Cincinnati	4	Pittsburgh	1
Atlanta	6	NY Mets	5
Houston	6	Chicago Cubs	2
St. Louis	6	Montreal	5
San Francisco	8	Colorado	6
Arizona	6	San Diego	3
Los Angeles	3	Milwaukee	2
Philadelphia at Florida	Postponed		

American League

Boston	8	Baltimore	3
Detroit	7	Toronto	5
NY Yankees	6	Tampa Bay	1
White Sox	3	Kansas City	0
Minnesota	5	Cleveland	4
Oakland	7	Anaheim	2
Seattle	15	Texas	4

Portuguese League

Spor. Lisbon	3	Estrela Amadora	0
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French League

Sochaux	1	Paris St. Germain	0
Monaco	3	Le Havre	0
Lens	2	Nantes	4
Bordeaux	4	Rennes	0
Strasbourg	2	Montpellier	1
Lorient	1	Metz	1
Nancy	0	Lyon	0
Toulouse	0	Auxerre	0
Bastia	0	Marseille	2

German League

Hamburg SV	1	Hansa Rostock	0
1860 Munich	2	Hertha Berlin	0

English Premiership

Aston Villa	1	Derby	0
Charlton	1	Coventry	1
Chelsea	2	Middlesbrough	0
Everton	0	Blackburn	0
Newcastle	2	Noton Forest	0
Sheff Wed	1	Arsenal	0
Tottenham	3	Leeds	3

Italian League

Bari	0	Bologna	0
AC Milan	1	Fiorentina	3
Udinese	2	Salernitana	0
AS Roma	2	Venezia	0
Parma v Juventus	(evening kick-off)		

Davis Cup

***Czech Republic 3, South Africa 0**
Jiri Novak/David Rikl (Cze) bt Wayne Ferreira/Piet Norval (Rsa) 6-4, 6-2, 6-2
Slava Dosedel (Cze) bt Wayne Ferreira (Rsa) 6-2, 6-3, 6-4
Bohdan Ulihrach (Cze) bt Marcos Ondruska (Rsa) 6-1, 6-2, 6-1

***Sweden 3, Spain 0**
Jonas Bjorkman/Nicklas Kulti beat Javier Sanchez/Julian Alonso 6-2 6-2 6-2
Bjorkman beat Alex Corretja 6-3 7-5 6-7 (7-5) 6-3
Thomas Johansson beat Carlos Moya 7-5 7-6 (7-4) 7-6 (8-6)

***Austria 3, Denmark 0**
Thomas Strengberger/Wolfgang Schranz (Aut) bt Kenneth Carlsen/Frederik Fetterlein (Den) 6-3, 6-2, 6-4
Markus Hipfl (Aut) bt Kenneth Carlsen (Den) 6-4, 6-0, 6-3
Stefan Koubek (Aut) bt Thomas Larsen (Den) 3-6, 3-6, 6-4, 6-0, 6-2

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF
AND TAMARA HIRSH
CROSS TRUMP: Mike Goren, Inc.

ANSWERS TO WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ

Q. 1 - Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:
A-A-K-Q-6-7-8-9-10-11-12-13-14-15-16-17-18-19-20-21-22-23-24-25-26-27-28-29-30-31-32-33-34-35-36-37-38-39-40-41-42-43-44-45-46-47-48-49-50-51-52-53-54-55-56-57-58-59-60-61-62-63-64-65-66-67-68-69-70-71-72-73-74-75-76-77-78-79-80-81-82-83-84-85-86-87-88-89-90-91-92-93-94-95-96-97-98-99-100-101-102-103-104-105-106-107-108-109-110-111-112-113-114-115-116-117-118-119-120-121-122-123-124-125-126-127-128-129-130-131-132-133-134-135-136-137-138-139-140-141-142-143-144-145-146-147-148-149-150-151-152-153-154-155-156-157-158-159-160-161-162-163-164-165-166-167-168-169-170-171-172-173-174-175-176-177-178-179-180-181-182-183-184-185-186-187-188-189-190-191-192-193-194-195-196-197-198-199-200-201-202-203-204-205-206-207-208-209-210-211-212-213-214-215-216-217-218-219-220-221-222-223-224-225-226-227-228-229-230-231-232-233-234-235-236-237-238-239-240-241-242-243-244-245-246-247-248-249-250-251-252-253-254-255-256-257-258-259-260-261-262-263-264-265-266-267-268-269-270-271-272-273-274-275-276-277-278-279-280-281-282-283-284-285-286-287-288-289-290-291-292-293-294-295-296-297-298-299-300-301-302-303-304-305-306-307-308-309-310-311-312-313-314-315-316-317-318-319-320-321-322-323-324-325-326-327-328-329-330-331-332-333-334-335-336-337-338-339-340-341-342-343-344-345-346-347-348-349-350-351-352-353-354-355-356-357-358-359-360-361-362-363-364-365-366-367-368-369-370-371-372-373-374-375-376-377-378-379-380-381-382-383-384-385-386-387-388-389-390-391-392-393-394-395-396-397-398-399-400-401-402-403-404-405-406-407-408-409-410-411-412-413-414-415-416-417-418-419-420-421-422-423-424-425-426-427-428-429-430-431-432-433-434-435-436-437-438-439-440-441-442-443-444-445-446-447-448-449-450-451-452-453-454-455-456-457-458-459-460-461-462-463-464-465-466-467-468-469-470-471-472-473-474-475-476-477-478-479-480-481-482-483-484-485-486-487-488-489-490-491-492-493-494-495-496-497-498-499-500-501-502-503-504-505-506-507-508-509-510-511-512-513-514-515-516-517-518-519-520-521-522-523-524-525-526-527-528-529-530-531-532-533-534-535-536-537-538-539-540-541-542-543-544-545-546-547-548-549-550-551-552-553-554-555-556-557-558-559-560-561-562-563-564-565-566-567-568-569-570-571-572-573-574-575-576-577-578-579-580-581-582-583-584-585-586-587-588-589-590-591-592-593-594-595-596-597-598-599-600-601-602-603-604-605-606-607-608-609-610-611-612-613-614-615-616-617-618-619-620-621-622-623-624-625-626-627-628-629-630-631-632-633-634-635-636-637-638-639-640-641-642-643-644-645-646-647-648-649-650-651-652-653-654-655-656-657-658-659-660-661-662-663-664-665-666-667-668-669-670-671-672-673-674-675-676-677-678-679-680-681-682-683-684-685-686-687-688-689-690-691-692-693-694-695-696-697-698-699-700-701-702-703-704-705-706-707-708-709-710-711-712-713-714-715-716-717-718-719-720-721-722-723-724-725-726-727-728-729-730-731-732-733-734-735-736-737-738-739-740-741-742-743-744-745-746-747-748-749-750-751-752-753-754-755-756-757-758-759-760-761-762-763-764-765-766-767-768-769-770-771-772-773-774-775-776-777-778-779-780-781-782-783-784-785-786-787-788-789-790-791-792-793-794-795-796-797-798-799-800-801-802-803-804-805-806-807-808-809-810-811-812-813-814-815-816-817-818-819-820-821-822-823-824-825-826-827-828-829-830-831-832-833-834-835-836-837-838-839-840-841-842-843-844-845-846-847-848-849-850-851-852-853-854-855-856-857-858-859-860-861-862-863-864-865-866-867-868-869-870-871-872-873-874-875-876-877-878-879-880-881-882-883-884-885-886-887-888-889-890-891-892-893-894-895-896-897-898-899-900-901-902-903-904-905-906-907-908-909-910-911-912-913-914-915-916-917-918-919-920-921-922-923-924-925-926-927-928-929-930-931-932-933-934-935-936-937-938-939-940-941-942-943-944-945-946-947-948-949-950-951-952-953-954-955-956-957-958-959-960-961-962-963-964-965-966-967-968-969-970-971-972-973-974-975-976-977-978-979-980-981-982-983-984-985-986-987-988-989-990-991-992-993-994-995-996-997-998-999-1000-1001-1002-1003-1004-1005-1006-1007-1008-1009-1010-1011-1012-1013-1014-1015-1016-1017-1018-1019-1020-1021-1022-1023-1024-1025-1026-1027-1028-1029-1030-1031-1032-1033-1034-1035-1036-1037-1038-1039-1040-1041-1042-1043-1044-1045-1046-1047-1048-1049-1050-1051-1052-1053-1054-1055-1056-1057-1058-1059-1060-1061-1062-1063-1064-1065-1066-1067-1068-1069-1070-1071-1072-1073-1074-1075-1076-1077-1078-1079-1080-1081-1082-1083-1084-1085-1086-1087-1088-1089-1090-1091-1092-1093-1094-1095-1096-1097-1098-1099-1100-1101-1102-1103-1104-1105-1106-1107-1108-1109-1110-1111-1112-1113-1114-1115-1116-1117-1118-1119-1120-1121-1122-1123-1124-1125-1126-1127-1128-1129-1130-1131-1132-1133-1134-1135-1136-1137-1138-1139-1140-1141-1142-1143-1144-1145-1146-1147-1148-1149-1150-1151-1152-1153-1154-1155-1156-1157-1158-1159-1160-1161-1162-1163-1164-1165-1166-1167-1168-1169-1170-1171-1172-1173-1174-1175-1176-1177-1178-1179-1180-1181-1182-1183-1184-1185-1186-1187-1188-1189-1190-1191-1192-1193-1194-1195-1196-1197-1198-1199-1200-1201-1202-1203-1204-1205-1206-1207-1208-1209-1210-1211-1212-1213-1214-1215-1216-1217-1218-1219-1220-1221-1222-1223-1224-1225-1226-1227-1228-1229-1230-1231-1232-1233-1234-1235-1236-1237-1238-1239-1240-1241-1242-1243-1244-1245-1246-1247-1248-1249-1250-1251-1252-1253-1254-1255-1256-1257-1258-1259-1260-1261-1262-1263-1264-1265-1266-1267-1268-1269-1270-1271-1272-1273-1274-1275-1276-1277-1278-1279-1280-1281-1282-1283-1284-1285-1286-1287-1288-1289-1290-1291-1292-1293-1294-1295-1296-1297-1298-1299-1300-1301-1302-1303-1304-1305-1306-1307-1308-1309-1310-1311-1312-1313-1314-1315-1316-1317-1318-1319-1320-1321-1322-1323-1324-1325-1326-1327-1328-1329-1330-1331-1332-1333-1334-1335-1336-1337-1338-1339-1340-1341-1342-1343-1344-1345-1346-1347-1348-1349-1350-1351-1352-1353-1354-1355-1356-1357-1358-1359-1360-1361-1362-1363-1364-1365-1366-1367-1368-1369-1370-1371-1372-1373-1374-1375-1376-1377-1378-1379-1380-1381-1382-1383-1384-1385-1386-1387-1388-1389-1390-1391-1392-1393-1394-1395-1396-1397-1398-1399-1400-1401-1402-1403-1404-1405-1406-1407-1408-1409-1410-1411-1412-1413-1414-1415-1416-1417-1418-1419-1420-1421-1422-1423-1424-1425-1426-1427-1428-1429-1430-1431-1432-1433-1434-1435-1436-1437-1438-1439-1440-1441-1442-1443-1444-1445-1446-1447-1448-1449-1450-1451-1452-1453-1454-1455-1456-1457-1458-1459-1460-1461-1462-1463-1464-1465-1466-1467-1468-1469-1470-1471-1472-1473-1474-1475-1476-1477-1478-1479-1480-1481-1482-1483-1484-1485-1486-1487-1488-1489-1490-1491-1492-1493-1494-1495-1496-1497-1498-1499-1500-1501-1502-1503-1504-1505-1506-1507-1508-1509-1510-1511-1512-1513-1514-1515-1516-1517-1518-1519-1520-1521-1522-1523-1524-1525-1526-1527-1528-1529-1530-1531-1532-1533-1534-1535-1536-1537-1538-1539-1540-1541-1542-1543-1544-1545-1546-1547-1548-1549-1550-1551-1552-1553-1554-1555-1556-1557-1558-1559-1560-1561-1562-1563-1564-1565-1566-1567-1568-1569-1570-1571-1572-1573-1574-1575-1576-1577-1578-1579-1580-1581-1582-1583-1584-1585-1586-1587-1588-1589-1590-1591-1592-1593-1594-1595-1596-1597-1598-1599-1600-1601-1602-1603-1604-1605-1606-1607-1608-1609-1610-1611-1612-1613-1614-1615-1616-1617-1618-1619-1620-1621-1622-1623-1624-1625-1626-1627-1628-1629-1630-1631-1632-1633-1634-1635-1636-1637-1638-1639-1640-1641-1642-1643-1644-1645-1646-1647-1648-1649-1650-1651-1652-1653-1654-1655-1656-1657-1658-1659-1660-1661-1662-1663-1664-1665-1666-1667-1668-1669-1670-1671-1672-1673-1674-1675-1676-1677-1678-1679-1680-1681-1682-1683-1684-1685-1686-1687-1688-1689-1690-1691-1692-1693-1694-1695-1696-1697-1698-1699-1700-1701-1702-1703-1704-1705-1706-1707-1708-1709-1710-1711-1712-1713-1714-1715-1716-1717-1718-1719-1720-1721-1722-1723-1724-1725-1726-1727-1728-1729-1730-1731-1732-1733-1734-1735-1736-1737-1738-1739-1740-1741-1742-1743-1744-1745-1746-1747-1748-1749-1750-1751-1752-1753-1754-1755-1756-1757-1758-1759-1760-1761-1762-1763-1764-1765-1766-1767-1768-1769-1770-1771-1772-1773-1774-1775-1776-1777-1778-1779-1780-1781-1782-1783-1784-1785-1786-1787-1788-1789-1790-1791-1792-1793-1794-1795-1796-1797-1798-1799-1800-1801-1802-1803-1804-1805-1806-1807-1808-1809-1810-1811-1812-1813-1814-1815-1816-1817-1818-1819-1820-1821-1822-1823-1824-1825-1826-1827-1828-1829-1830-1831-1832-1833-1834-1835-1836-1837-1838-1839-1840-1841-1842-1843-1844-1845-1846-1847-1848-1849-1850-1851-1852-1853-1854-1855-1856-1857-1858-1859-1860-1861-1862-1863-1864-1865-1866-1867-1868-1869-1870-1871-1872-1873-1874-1875-1876-1877-1878-1879-1880-1881-1882-1883-1884-1885-1886-1887-1888-1889-1890-1891-1892-1893-1894-1895-1896-1897-1898-1899-1900-1901-1902-1903-1904-1905-1906-1907-1908-1909-1910-1911-1912-1913-1914-1915-1916-1917-1918-1919-1920-1921-1922-1923-1924-1925-1926-1927-1928-1929-1930-1931-1932-1933-1934-1935-1936-1937-1938-1939-1940-1941-1942-1943-1944-1945-1946-1947-1948-1949-1950-1951-1952-1953-1954-

In answer to Kurd accord:

Turkey to upgrade diplomatic ties with Iraq

ANKARA (R) — Turkey said on Saturday it would upgrade its diplomatic relations with neighbouring Iraq in an angry response to a U.S.-backed agreement between Iraq's Kurdish factions.

Deputy Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit said in a statement that Turkey planned to send an ambassador to Baghdad for the first time since 1992.

NATO member Turkey, which fears Iraqi Kurdish separatism could encourage its own restive Kurds, will also help to speed up the appointment of an Iraqi ambassador to Ankara.

That post has been vacant for several months.

"These mutual appointments will aid our dialogue and relations with the Iraqi administration," Ecevit said.

Turkey has complained about being left out of a deal agreed in Washington this month between Iraqi Kurdish faction leaders Massoud Barzani and Jalal Talabani.

Turkey is also to send its ambassador back to Libya, Ecevit's statement said. The diplomat was recalled three weeks ago in a row over

Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi's alleged support for Kurdish rebels in Turkey.

The statement made no direct connection between the situation in northern Iraq and the decision to send the ambassador back to Libya, which is a blow to U.S. efforts to isolate Qadhafi.

The Iraqi Kurdish accord provides for elections next year to re-establish a regional assembly in northern Iraq which collapsed in 1994 amid fighting between the Kurdish groups.

Turkey sees the accord as leading to a federation in Iraq that would give the Kurds a greater say in the running of their own affairs.

The Washington deal, partially brokered by U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, is likely to make obsolete the Ankara peace process, a series of Kurdish peace talks influenced by Turkey.

"In this way, the Ankara peace process has been sidelined, Ecevit's statement said. "There is no chance of Turkey approving these changes." In the

past Turkey has strongly backed Barzani's group in a bid to prevent Turkey's Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) rebels setting up bases in northern Iraq, which has been out of Baghdad's control since after the 1991 Gulf war.

U.S. and British air force jets patrol the skies of northern Iraq to prevent the Baghdad government's troops entering the mountainous Kurdish enclave.

But the United States has rarely criticised frequent Turkish military cross-border incursions in recent years aimed at camps of the PKK, fighting for Kurdish self rule in southeast Turkey.

Turkish troops have been continuously stationed in the northern tip of Iraq for more than a year.

The West has also turned a blind eye to a growing trade in cheap Iraqi diesel through Barzani-held territory to Turkey which, technically breaches the U.N. sanctions imposed on Iraq after the invasion of Kuwait in 1990.

Oil multinationals complain the illicit diesel flow is hurting their business in Turkey.



A BIG PILE OF SHOES: A child throws a pair of shoes on a pyramid of shoes in central Lyon on Saturday as part of a protest action called by 'Handicap International' humanitarian group to remind the world of the horrors of anti-personnel mines (AFP photo)

Art exhibition in U.S. aims to promote a better image of Iran

U.S., Saudis encouraged by positive steps from Tehran

NEW YORK (AP) — In the first such event since Iran-U.S. relations soured two decades ago, Iran's foreign minister opened a cultural exhibition Friday that organisers hope will help promote a better image of their revolutionary country.

The small exhibition, at a makeshift gallery in New York, is part of an effort by Iran's moderate President Mohammad Khatami to smooth out his country's hostile ties with the United States through non-official exchanges.

"We think that Iran has a great culture and civilisation that has been overshadowed by the bad relations with the United States. Now, we're trying to show Americans a different side of Iran," said Mohammad Yazdani, an Iranian-American who organised the show.

The show, which features 12 Iranian and Iranian-American artists, is sponsored by a private council comprised of Iranian-American academics.

Yazdani, who has lived in the United States for more than 30 years, said he had been approached by Iranian diplomats at the United Nations to organise the two-day event. He said they had helped set it up.

There have been several sports and academic exchanges between Iran and the United States since Khatami called for people-to-

people exchanges with America last January.

U.S. wrestlers have received warm welcomes in Iran twice this year and Iranian athletes also have been to the United States.

Kamal Kharrazi, the foreign minister, visited the exhibition of paintings, books and calligraphy for about 30 minutes. He was part of the delegation that accompanied Khatami for a United Nations General Assembly session.

The colourful show features Iranian painters like Mahmoud Farshchian, considered one of the masters of contemporary Iranian art, and other renowned artists like Parviz Kalantari and Taraghi.

Before leaving the United States Tuesday, Khatami called for more exchanges with the United States, saying he would like to see American investment in Iran. A U.S. embargo bans investment and trade with Tehran.

U.S. officials have welcomed cultural exchanges with the United States, but have called for direct talks with Iranian officials. Despite Khatami's conciliatory tone, he has been reluctant to engage in any talk of relations because of strong opposition from religious hard-liners inside Iran's Islamic government.

On Thursday, Kharrazi said his government was distancing itself from a \$2.5 million reward for killing Salman Rushdie, the Indian-born British author of the "The Satanic Verses." Iran's 1989 death sentence on Rushdie, imposed by the late Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini who said the writer had committed blasphemy against Islam in his book, has contributed to Iran's tarnished international image.

The United States severed ties with Iran after revolutionary militants stormed the U.S. embassy in Tehran and held 52 Americans hostage for 444 days.

Washington re-iterating its "recognition of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as a secure and reliable supplier of energy resources."

Clinton and the prince talked about the Middle East peace process, the conflicts in Afghanistan and Kosovo, as well as the global economy.

Both leaders agreed that the situation in Kosovo was unacceptable, and condemned the severe measures taken by the Yugoslav government that resulted in a displacement of thousands of residents of Albanian ancestry.

Earlier in the day the prince held two and a half hours of talks with Secretary of State Madeleine Albright on the Middle East peace process and the situation in the Gulf.

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Foreign investors, who have suffered badly in Russia this year, are anxious to see coherent plans to sort out the mess.

On Saturday, Primakov set up a working group for talks with investors on the future of Russia's GKO Treasury bills, which were frozen last month, news agencies quoted Zadornov as saying.

The group will be headed by Andrei Shapovalov, who on Friday was appointed to economy minister from first deputy. Zadornov said the group, of which he is also part, expected to start talks with investors, domestic and foreign, on Tuesday.

Britain and leader of the Islamist group Al Muhajiroun, said the offender should be killed even if he repented.

Bakri was replying to a question about the verdict on anyone who insults the Prophet. The questions and answers were faxed to Reuters on Saturday.

His response said that anyone who insulted "the Messenger Muhammad" is to be killed by an Islamic authority, i.e. the Islamic state. However today, in the absence of a true Islamic state, or Khalifa, such capital punishment cannot be implemented by individuals.

The death penalty, Bakri added, is to be carried out even if the offender "repents and becomes the most pious person on earth thereafter."

Sheikh Omar Bakri, a judge of the Sharia (Islamic law) court in

Britain's Queen Mother returns personal gift

WELLINGTON (R) — A gift of reinforced underwear from New Zealand has been returned by Britain's Queen Mother with a polite "thanks, but no thanks." The knickers, with semi-rigid shells inserted into them to protect the wearer's hips, were sent to the Queen Mother by Auckland University's Injury Prevention Centre. New Zealand's GP Magazine reported. The 98-year-old Queen Mother has had both her hip joints replaced. The knickers had been returned with a note signed by a lady-in-waiting. "The Queen Mother does not feel able to accept a gift of such a personal nature from you and I return it herewith together with Her Majesty's thanks for taking the trouble to send it," the note read.

Girls sent home from school for wearing 'Spice Girl' shoes

FRIMLEY (AFP) — Seventy girls have been temporarily dismissed from an English private school for wearing "Spice Girl" style shoes, as the head-teacher considered them unsafe, it was reported Saturday. The Times said Tony Ryles, head of Tomlinson School, South-west of London, was worried that the girls were "tottering around" in the stacked high-heeled shoes and platform boots favoured by the British all-girl band. Rejecting criticism that he let the girls return home alone, Ryles said they were "walking accidents waiting to happen."

'Now we know what is allowed'

WARSAW (R) — The Polish sex industry opened its first legal trade fair, taking advantage of a new law clarifying the status of pornography in the largely Roman Catholic country. International porn stars mingled with businessmen selling erotic confectionery at the Eroticon '98 show, which attracted large crowds of both men and women on its opening day. "The new law helps us a lot," said Jaroslaw Ender, president of the Pink Press, a Polish erotic publishing concern which is staging the three-day event in a popular disco. "Now we know what's allowed. Before we had to guess."

Denmark's royal couple attend niece's wedding

ALBAS (AFP) — Queen Margrethe of Denmark and her husband Prince Consort Henrik attended the wedding of one of their nieces in a village in southern France Saturday afternoon. After the ceremony at the town hall, the Danish royal couple paid their compliments to prince Henrik's niece Anne-Marie Beauvillain de Monpezat, whose family home is in Alsace. The bride, a student in Toulouse, married Vincent Diegou, an economist from the same southern French city.

Children's Rights Prize for Sweden's Queen Silvia

COPENHAGEN (AFP) — The 1998 Children's Rights Prize has been awarded to Queen Silvia of Sweden for her fight against child pornography, the Danish chapter of Save the Children announced Friday. The charity commended the queen's "intense and courageous personal involvement." The award, a statuette by Danish artist Per Arvola and a cheque for \$4,680, will be presented to the queen on October 28 during an international conference on child sex abuse in Copenhagen. The Children's Rights Prize was created in 1995 to honour persons defending children's rights.

Israel deployed nuke-capable missiles in '73 war with Arabs

TEL AVIV (R) — An Israeli official has said that during a critical moment in the 1973 Middle East war Israel deployed its long-range Jericho missiles which, according to reports abroad, are capable of carrying nuclear warheads.

But Yitral Ne'eman, a former cabinet minister and a key figure in Israel's nuclear programme, said Israel did not arm the missiles with nuclear warheads during the conflict.

Experts said it was the first time an Israeli official had confirmed Jerichos had been deployed.

Ne'eman told Reuters in an interview that Israel received U.S. satellite information in the second week of the 1973 war indicating that Egypt might be arming Scud missiles with nuclear warheads.

Egypt had not developed nuclear weapons but Israel was concerned that the Soviet Union, which backed Cairo, may have sent some to Egypt during the war. Ne'eman said Israel intended the deployment as a warning to Egypt and the

Soviet Union.

"Dado [then Israeli army chief David Elazar] responded by deploying our Jericho missiles in a very open area so that Soviet satellites could see them clearly. But there was no nuclear matter involved. These were regular missiles," Ne'eman said.

Information about the Jericho is classified in Israel. Reports abroad put the missile's range at about 1,500 kilometres. Israel has launched satellites with what is believed to be a version of the Jericho.

"I have never seen an official confirmation of such a deployment during the war," said political scientist Shai Feldman, who heads Tel Aviv University's Jaffee Centre for Strategic Studies.

Egypt and Syria launched a surprise attack on October 6, 1973, while most Israelis were marking Yom Kippur, the Jewish Day of Atonement.

The Arab armies made deep advances in the first days of the war, prompting Israeli Defence Minister Moshe Dayan to alert the cabinet at one point that

Israel could be destroyed.

But officials have denied reports over the years that Israel considered using nuclear weapons during the war.

"There was no Israeli nuclear dimension to this war. I took part in all the meetings on this matter during the war so I should know," said Ne'eman.

At the time, Ne'eman was a senior defence ministry official.

He also headed Israel's Atomic Energy Agency for many years.

The tide turned during the second week of the war and by the time a ceasefire was in place on October 22, Israel had driven back both the Egyptian and Syrian armies.

Israeli officials neither confirm nor deny reports published abroad that Israel has hundreds of nuclear bombs, sticking to a decades-old policy of deliberate ambiguity.

Israel is believed to have launched a nuclear weapons programme in the late 1950s and experts say that by 1973 it already had a small atomic arsenal.

New Russia government falls out, protest plans grow

MOSCOW (R) — Russia seemed as far as ever from sorting out its economic chaos on Saturday. A former deputy premier who walked out on Friday after just nine days in office lambasted his erstwhile colleagues and said cash from the International Monetary Fund would be held up for months as Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov dithers over strategy between leftist and liberal options.

Communist party leader Gennady Zyuganov met the head of the main trade union body and agreed on tactics for a nationwide day of protest on October 7. They are seeking months of overdue wages and pensions and want President Boris Yeltsin to resign.

Unpaid scientists and research workers announced plans to seal off main roads into Moscow and a newspaper warned that one army garrison, pushed to the brink by wage delays and lack of food, was ready to block the Trans-Siberian railway with tanks.

"The government is in crisis," the business newspaper Kommersant-Daily said following centrist Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Shokhin's decision to walk out on the government after Primakov reappointed liberal Finance Minister Mikhail Zadornov.

Shokhin bitterly criticised Zadornov, accusing him of a key role in the effective debt default and rouble devaluation launched by the last government on

August 17, and also hit out at Primakov for trying to fuse conflicting political interests.

"When they invited me into the government they clearly intended to use me as window dressing for the West and so there was no question of my having any influence in drafting the government programme," Shokhin told a news conference.

Primakov is still struggling to form a cabinet with broad support to combat the crisis. He was confirmed in office two weeks ago by the Communist-led parliament after it forced Yeltsin to drop a bid to install ex-Premier Viktor Chernomyrdin.

The former foreign minister has

assured the West that market reforms will go on, tempered with aid for industry and the poor.

He called Shokhin's walkout "irresponsible," but said his government, towards which the Communists have also been cooling rapidly, would not be weakened by it.

Yeltsin "expressed regret" at Shokhin's decision, a Kremlin spokesman said.

Meanwhile, former Yeltsin economic adviser Alexander Livshits, seen by some analysts as a possible replacement for Shokhin, said in a radio interview that Shokhin's walkout could damage Russia's position at talks with its creditors.

"If I were him I would not have done it because so many things depended on him, including talks with the West. In the end Zadornov is not a monster impossible to deal with," Livshits told Elho Moskovy radio.

Yet there was still no word on who might take over Shokhin's duties as deputy premier in charge of finance and negotiations with international creditors.

Primakov seems no nearer to resolving differences between free market liberals like Zadornov, who favour a tighter money policy, and First Deputy Prime Minister Yuri Maslyukov and new central bank chief Viktor Gerashchenko, who play down the

risks of inflation and favour printing cash to tame Russia's crisis.

Foreign investors, who have suffered badly in Russia this year, are anxious to see coherent plans to sort out the mess.

On Saturday, Primakov set up a working group for talks with investors on the future of Russia's GKO Treasury bills, which were frozen last month, news agencies quoted Zadornov as saying.

The group will be headed by Andrei Shapovalov, who on Friday was appointed to economy minister from first deputy. Zadornov said the group, of which he is also part, expected to start talks with investors, domestic and foreign, on Tuesday.

Iran's moderate turnaround on Rushdie sparks hardliners' anger worldwide

BRITISH WRITER Salman Rushdie cannot afford to let down his guard despite a deal between London and Tehran over a religious death order, hard-line conservative newspapers in Iran said Saturday.

Rushdie's life is still in danger, one newspaper said, and another noted that a \$2.5 million bounty for his execution was still on offer.

But a cabinet minister laid to rest any doubts that the deal announced by the British and Iranian foreign ministers in New York on Thursday had the full backing of all sections of the Iranian government.

Defence Minister Ali Shamkhani, speaking to

reporters in Tehran, said: "I do not think any change [in Iran's position] has taken place, but whatever has happened has been confirmed by the totality of the government."

Tehran Radio referred in a commentary to remarks by British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook dissociating the British government from Rushdie's novel "The Satanic Verses" and its contents and said these remarks were made while Khomeini's verdict against the author was still effective.

"The fact that Islamic and human values are raised and supported in the highest diplomatic levels is in itself a big victory for the Muslims and for humanity in general," it said.

Pakistani Islamic groups said Saturday that they were outraged

that their western Muslim neighbour Iran softened its stand toward Rushdie.

"The Iranian brand of Islam has been exposed," Sheikh Hakim, chief of Sunni Islamist Sipah-e-Sahaba, or the Guardians of the Friends of the Prophet, told the Associated Press. "According to Islam Rushdie is liable to death, but Iran is changing its stance for worldly gains."

Iranian Foreign Minister Kamal Kharrazi Thursday announced in New York that his country would distance itself from a \$2.5 million reward offered for Rushdie.

Rushdie, a Muslim by birth, lauded Iran's decision in London Friday, but said he neither sought an apology or would give one.

Several years ago seven people died in Pakistan during violent protests against Rushdie's book.

The Iranian embassy in Pakistan in a statement Saturday, however, said the verdict of Ayatollah Khomeini still holds good and an insult to Islamic sanctities and values was not acceptable to its government.

Shah Faridul Haq, vice president of Jamiat Ulema-e-Pakistan, a right wing religious party with representation in Pakistan's Senate or Upper House of Parliament, said there was a consensus among all Muslim sects that Rushdie should be killed.

"If Iran withdraws its decision, this means the country is contradicting its faith and fundamental principles of Islam," he said.

Saleem Qadri, a leader of hard-line Sunni Tehrik, or Sunni Movement, said a person involved in blasphemy has to be killed even if he asks for pardon.

Pakistan also has strict blasphemy laws that impose the death penalty against anyone found guilty of insulting Islam.

"No one can change a fatwa because it is in line to the Holy book [the Koran]," said Qadri. Munawar Hasan, general secretary of orthodox Jamaat-e-Islami, said Iran's verdict was its internal affair.

"But Rushdie has hurt the feelings of Muslims all over the world and the British government is trying to portray him as a hero. If he had been living here, we would have punished him according to our laws," he said.

A leader of Shiite Tehrik-e-Jafria, Allama Hussain Turabi, said Iran's statement was distorted by the Western media.

"No one has a right to scrap a fatwa. Who ever indulges in blasphemy or leaves Islam must be killed... there is no dispute about it," he said.

He said no one can challenge Khomeini's decision, because he was the supreme leader.

"It is responsibility of every Muslim to kill Rushdie where ever he is found," said Turabi.

A London-based Muslim judge says an offender of the Prophet Muhammad, such as British writer Salman Rushdie, should be killed by a true Islamic state and not by individuals.

Sheikh Omar Bakri, a judge of the Sharia (Islamic law) court in